CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

Allegheny College
Library

Bought from the
William Davis
Memorial Fund

35 40

WITHDRAWN

SECOND SERIES

CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

(*First Series*)

Edited

With an Introduction on *Folk-Play Making*

By

FREDERICK H. KOCH

WHEN WITCHES RIDE. By Elizabeth A. Lay. Of three men and a witch, on the night of a wild storm.

PEGGY. By Harold Williamson. The tragedy of the daughter of a North Carolina tenant farmer (4 m., 2 w. and a boy).

"DOD GAST YE BOTH!" By Hubert Heffner. A moonshiner's comedy (6 m., 1w.). Exterior in mountains.

OFF NAG'S HEAD or THE BELL BUOY. By Dougald MacMillan. A tragedy about an old woman, a portrait, a mad storm and land pirates (2 m., 4 w.).

THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES. By Paul Green. Of a Croatan outlaw who came home (1 m., 3 w.).

With illustrations from the actual productions. The five plays in one volume, $1.75.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON, in *Judge:* "Ah! Something American! . . . and well-made, too. Here is a true amateur theatre, created to bring a richer, fuller life to a community far from Broadway, and even farther from Moscow. With, or without George Nathan's permission, we toss up our hat and cry, Hoorah!"

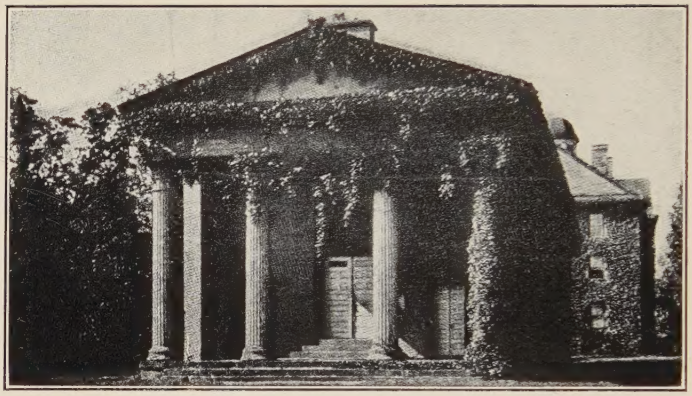
AUGUSTUS THOMAS, in *The New York Review:* "I consider them fully equal to any of the Irish folklore plays produced by the Abbey Company under Lady Gregory's direction."

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

Publishers New York

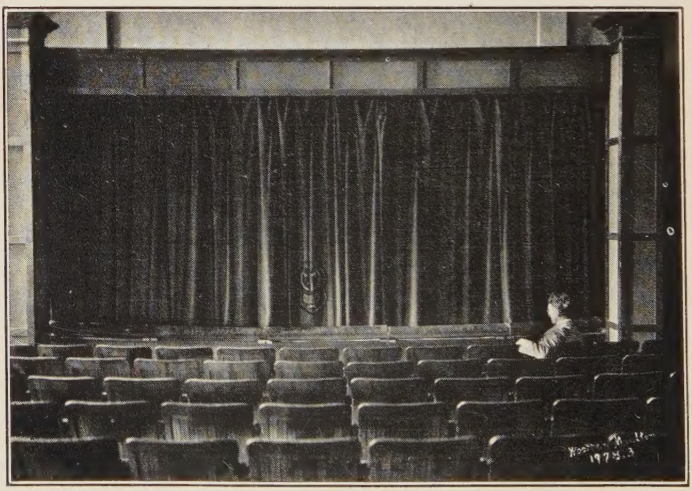
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/carolinafolkplay0000fred_p2e7



THE PLAYMAKERS THEATRE

This classic building on the campus of the University of North Carolina has been remodelled and equipped with laboratory facilities for the construction of stage equipment. It is the home of The Carolina Playmakers, and serves as a State Theatre for all North Carolina.



THE PLAYMAKERS STAGE—*in The Chapel Hill School Building—designed for temporary use. Up to the present time all the* Carolina Folk-Plays *have been produced here.*

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

SECOND SERIES

CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

Edited

With An Introduction on MAKING A FOLK THEATRE

By

FREDERICK H. KOCH

Founder and Director of The Carolina Playmakers
And Editor of the First Series of their plays

Illustrated from photographs of the original productions of the plays

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1924

COPYRIGHT, 1924
BY
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

All of these plays have been successfully produced.

No royalty is asked for performing rights when no admission is charged. Otherwise there is a charge of five dollars for each performance by amateurs. Professional actors must make special arrangements.

No performance of these plays may be given without full acknowledgment to The Carolina Playmakers, Inc., and to the publishers. Acknowledgment should be made to read as follows: "From the *Carolina Folk-Plays* edited by FREDERICK H. KOCH, Director. Produced by arrangement with The Carolina Playmakers, Inc., and the publishers."

For permission to produce any of the plays address FREDERICK H. KOCH, Director, The Carolina Playmakers, Inc., Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The plays in this volume can be read or played anywhere, upon the terms stated above. While it would be well for the actors to study the hints on pronunciation in the Appendix of the *First Series* of *Carolina Folk-Plays* still, outside of the Carolinas, the parts can be effectively played by actors speaking more or less in the manner of the country folk in whatever state the play is being presented.

Printed in the
United States of America

VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC.
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE LIBRARY

TO
HARRY WOODBURN CHASE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA

WITH APPRECIATION

28274

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE LIBRARY

THE PLAYMAKERS' AIM

FIRST: *To promote and encourage dramatic art, especially by the production and publishing of plays.*

SECOND: *To serve as an experimental theatre for the development of plays representing the traditions and various phases of present-day life of the people.*

THIRD: *To extend its influences in the establishment of a native theatre in other communities.*

CONTENTS

PAGE

Aims of the Carolina Playmakers . . . vi

Making a Folk Theatre xiii

Trista, a Play of Folk-Superstition 3
By Elizabeth A. Lay

The Return of Buck Gavin, the Tragedy of a Mountain Outlaw 33
By Thomas Clayton Wolfe

Gaius and Gaius, Jr., a Comedy of Plantation Days 47
By Lucy M. Cobb

Fixin's, the Tragedy of a Tenant-Farm Woman 79
By Erma and Paul Green

The Beaded Buckle, a Comedy of Village Aristocracy 121
By Frances Gray

Appendix I: The Carolina Playmakers 153
Productions of the Carolina Playmakers

Appendix II: The Carolina Playmakers 162
A Selected Bibliography

Appendix III: The Dakota Playmakers . 169
A Selected Bibliography

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE PLAYMAKERS THEATRE and THE PLAYMAKERS STAGE . . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

The Playmakers Mask vi
A wood-cut by Julius J. Lankes

The Playmakers Poster Design xi
A wood-cut by Mary De B. Graves

The Playmakers Program Heading xiii
A wood-cut by Julius J. Lankes

Katherine Batts as *Trista* . . . . *Facing* 2

Scene from TRISTA . . . . . *Facing* 18

Thomas Wolfe as *Buck Gavin* . . . *Facing* 32

Scene from GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR. . *Facing* 46

Frances Gray as *Lilly Robinson* in FIXIN'S *Facing* 78

Scene from FIXIN'S . . . . . *Facing* 110

Scene from THE BEADED BUCKLE . . *Facing* 120

The illustrations of the plays are from photographs of the original productions made by Wootten-Moulton, New Bern. North Carolina.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS' DESIGN
(See *Toward a Folk Theatre,* page xiii)

MAKING A FOLK THEATRE

By Frederick H. Koch

Founder of The Dakota Playmakers and The Carolina Playmakers.

The second volume of *Carolina Folk-Plays,* like the first, represents the work of student playwrights at the University of North Carolina. The materials are drawn from experience and observation—from folk-tales and the common tradition, and from present-day life in North Carolina. They are indigenous to the life.

The design of The Carolina Playmakers on the preceding page by Mary deB. Graves of Chapel Hill, the home of the Playmakers, tells something of the range of the work—Blackbeard, pirate of the Carolina coast, looking to the past; the young mountain man, the mother and child, looking to the future. It suggests the expression of our native life and its perpetuation in these simple plays, toward a folk theater of North Carolina—a theater which is contributing to the state a fresh consciousness of itself,—its lore and its legends, its romantic history, and its stirring new life of to-day.

THE FIRST SERIES

The first volume of *Carolina Folk-Plays* introduced an interesting variety of characters from the Carolina country: *When Witches Ride,* the strange tale of an old hag, Phoebe Ward, who haunted the sparsely settled Roanoke River country in former times; *Peggy,* the drab tragedy of a girl born to the serfdom of a tenant-farm; *Off Nags Head,* a legend of the mysterious disappearance of Theodosia Burr, daughter of Aaron Burr, taken by the half-barbarous "bankers" of the pirate-ridden coast; *"Dod Gast Ye Both!",* a realistic comedy of mountain moonshiners, adventurers in the high hills; *The Last of the Lowries,* the passing of an heroic figure, Henry Berrie Lowrie, chief of the clan of Croatans, who terrorized the whole country for many miles about from their den in Scuffletown swamp.

THE NEW PLAYS

The *Second Series* presents a new range of characters and scenes: *Trista,* a wistful tale of an early colonial settlement by Pamlico Sound; *The Return of Buck Gavin,* the fearless deed of a mountain outlaw; *Gaius and Gaius, Jr.,* a robustious comedy of plantation days; *Fixin's,* a stark tragedy of a tenant-farm home; *The Beaded Buckle,* an intimate transcript of village society of to-day.

TRISTA

The author of *Trista* comes from Beaufort, a little town by the sea, which still retains the spirit of colonial

times. She knows the sturdy lives of the fisher-folk and understands the meaning of their wondering beliefs. These she holds to be as much a part of our heritage as the religion brought from England by the first settlers. What is now looked upon as worn-out superstition, in *Trista* is restored to its original meaning and beauty.

Witches were usually conceived as ugly old hags, but Trista is a young woman, fair, akin to the sirens of the Greeks and to the fairies of all times. Here a legend of an outlived past is interpreted for its human significance.

THE RETURN OF BUCK GAVIN

Thomas Clayton Wolfe—or better, just plain "Tom" Wolfe, as he is familiarly known here on "The Hill," was born in Asheville in the mountains of western North Carolina. *The Return of Buck Gavin* is his first play. It was written in the fall of 1918, the year of the beginnings of The Carolina Playmakers for our initial performance. "Tom" himself played the part of Buck Gavin—no one else could be found to do it—no one who knew the life as he knew it. He had never acted before, but a glance at the illustration accompanying the text of the play will indicate how completely he embodied the character of his rugged hero. He was scarcely eighteen years of age then, but he had found himself as a "playmaker" in his own play.

I have before me as I write, the original manuscript of the little play, and his illuminating foreword—good

counsel for the young author. "When the dramatic possibilities of this incident flashed upon me," he says, "I immediately started to work with a set of mountain characters, the principal being Buck Gavin, an outlaw. It is a fallacy of the young writer, I believe, to picture the dramatic as unusual and remote. It is therefore but natural that he should choose for the setting of his first effort a New York apartment house, the Barbary Coast of San Francisco, or some remote land made dramatic by all the perfumes of Arabia. . . . But the dramatic is not the unusual. It is happening daily in our lives. Some of us, perhaps, toil on a mountain farm, and when we relax from the stolidity of mind and allow ourselves thought, it is to think bitterly on the unvaried, monotonous grind of our existence. Here is drama in the true sense."

In his phrasing of his own feelings, the youthful author of *Buck Gavin* has expressed the attitude of all our group. When the writer portrays the characters and scenes with which he is familiar—simple, homely scenes they may be—we share with him the life he knows and feels. His drama becomes our own.

Upon the completion of his course at the University here, Mr. Wolfe went to Cambridge to join Professor Baker's 47 Workshop. His play, *The Mountains,* dealing with the unequal struggle of the Highland farmer in North Carolina, was produced by The Workshop, in 1921. Another of his plays, *Welcome to Our City,* portraying certain aspects of the race conflict in the South, was produced in 1923. Mr. Wolfe is now an instructor in English in New York

University and is at work on other plays of Southern life.

GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR.

The chief character in *Gaius and Gaius, Jr.,* by Lucy M. Cobb of Chapel Hill, was drawn from life—from descriptions of him given by his kinsmen and neighbors, and from the family portrait. Mr. Gaius Mayfield was an irascible old gentleman of the old school, a great-great-uncle of the author. He was absolute master of his household—hot-headed and dictatorial—though kindly, for all his blustering.

The incident recorded in the play—that of the town protesting against his working his negroes on Sunday—and his constant fear of dying are true to the facts. The author has given us a realistic portrayal of the spacious Southern plantations in the days before the devastating War Between the States.

In production the comedy of *Gaius* is irresistible. On three State Tours this season—from the tiny mountain town of Candler in the west, to Elizabeth City on the coast—it has been greeted with "tumultuous applause," as one of our newspaper reviewers phrased it.

FIXIN'S

Fixin's, by Erma and Paul Green, is a study of the grinding poverty of tenant-farm life, which the authors have observed from childhood. Here the pent fury of the work-driven woman, Lilly Robinson, is portrayed with grim and terrible reality. She craves a little beauty—"purty fixin's." But her husband's eyes can-

not see beyond the sod he plows. The scene is a bare cabin home in Harnett County, but the theme is universal—the pitiful conflict of two natures which are irreconcilable.

In all the towns of The Playmakers' itinerary this season this play has had a powerful appeal. The Editor of *The Smithfield* (Johnston County, N. C.) *Herald* expresses it: *"Fixin's* went straight to the hearts of those present. Too many times had that scene been enacted before their eyes in real life. The simple story of the tenant farmer's wife was too true to mean actual enjoyment to the spectators. The scene might just as well have been in Johnston County as in Harnett. It was typical of this, the cotton section of North Carolina."

THE BEADED BUCKLE

In *The Beaded Buckle,* Frances Gray of Chapel Hill, gives us an intimate glimpse of present day small-town "aristocracy." The actual name of town where the scene occurs, and the real name of the heroine are withheld—for obvious reasons. The real Mrs. Agnes Miller, however, still flourishes as the leader of the "smart set" of her Glendale and still fascinates all who know her with her irresistible charm. "Her soft, beguiling voice is very sweet," the author confesses, "and I am still under her spell." The other characters of the play are still in Glendale—her genial neighbor, Louise; her darling boy, Joe; old Herb Shine, keeper of The Metropolitan Store; and "the little clerk," Leona King.

This is Miss Gray's first play on the Playmaker's Stage. She is still a very young playwright, in fact only eighteen. Besides writing *The Beaded Buckle* this year, Miss Gray has distinguished herself as a player of much promise—especially in the exacting rôle of Lilly Robinson, in *Fixin's*.

THE PLAY-IN-THE-MAKING

The published *Carolina Folk Plays* are selected from scores of plays written each year by the students of English 31, the University course devoted to dramatic composition. This course is conducted informally, as a seminar in creative writing, the instructor and the students seated about a long table. There is no textbook, and there are no formal lectures on dramatic technique. The student is expected to read with alert imagination, such plays as will give him a conception of what constitutes good dramatic form. Occasionally a scene is read aloud. But there is no critical analysis of the plays read. Such a process may tend to make the young writer self-conscious—to inhibit his impulse to write.

The approach is frankly experimental, and constructive toward sound dramatic expression. The instructor directs the attention of the student to the dramatic happenings in the life with which he is most familiar—to the strange tales of Blackbeard in his home-town of Bath; to the restless lives of the workers in a mill village; to the balladry of sea-faring men on the shifting banks; to the comedy of a sun-tanned country boy; to the bitter hatreds of his own Highland

people; to the old plantation homestead he knows, redolent of forgotten romance; to the lonely farm-cabin he has passed day after day, without heeding the living drama it holds; to the "queer" characters in the little town he knows so well—old "Doc" Ickard, the village "hoss doctor," and big Ike O'Neill of the wonderful tales. All these he may weave into plays if he looks with seeing eyes, if he catches the throb of life waiting there to be expressed.

The spirit of the group is communal. The students come to the meetings of the course with vague ideas for plays-in-the-making. Perhaps the boy from the Piedmont section will begin: "I know about a country boy's courtship which ought to make a play. The old man used to stamp on the floor of his bedroom as a signal for the boy to go home. One night the boy—we'll call him 'Lem'—conceived the idea of pretending to leave. He called out to the girl a loud 'Good-by,' and banged the outside door. Then after a little he slipped in through the window in his stocking feet to finish saying 'Good-night.' But the father came in and discovered the trick."

"That's a good one," some one laughs. "But how did the father happen to come in?"

And another pipes up, "I think you ought to make use of the little brother who is always butting in on the courtship."

"That's good," from the prospective playwright. "The girl had two brothers, and I can work them both in for some good laughs."

Then a rival suitor is added to complicate the action, and a few days later, when the embryo play comes back to be read to the group, it has the elements of a real plot.

A lively discussion ensues. "The ending is weak." "Why not have the little brother steal Lem's shoes, so he can't make his get-away?"

"That's bully! I'll do it."

And—with the assistance of one of the co-eds in the course in phrasing the speeches of the girl—with much re-shaping of the plot, revising of the characters, recasting of the dialogue, the comedy of *Dixon's Kitchen* finally emerges. Of course it is rewritten again and again before it is ready, at last, for a tryout on the Playmakers Stage. And it must undergo still further changes in the lines in the process of rehearsal, before it is produced.

So the play is not merely written; it is mostly rewritten. It is really a composite product of all the members of the group, with the experience of the instructor to guide the instinct of the young playwrights in the complex process of building a play.

THE AUTHORS' READING

Of the new plays written in English 31 each term, six are chosen for the Authors' Reading. Each author reads his own play, seated informally by a little table. The glow of a reading lamp shows him his manuscript, and fixes the attention of the audience on the face of the reader. A Play Committee, representing various

points of view, has been appointed by the Director to advise with the Producing Staff in the selection of three plays for the next bill.

An Authors' Reading of new plays is an event in Playmaker circles. There is always a large attendance and an interested audience. Here those who are planning to try for parts may get the author's interpretation of the characters at first hand. Immediately after the Reading, the Play Committee meets with the Producing Staff, of which the Director is the chairman, and the new plays are chosen. On the following days the tryouts are held.

THE TRYOUTS

The tryouts are open to all—students, instructors and towns-people alike—for The Carolina Playmakers' membership is never closed. Any one may have a part who merits it. Customarily there are a hundred or more candidates. The Cast Committee, again in conjunction with the Producing Staff, makes the assignment of characters. Frequently an author acts in his own play. He is encouraged to do so and the play often gains much thereby.

Always a number of new actors are chosen. The assignments of parts is by no means final. Substitutions may be made at any time in the process of rehearsal, if such are found necessary.

The tryouts are conducted with fairness to all, petty prejudices being put aside for the good of the play. This spirit has always prevailed.

THE PRODUCTION-IN-THE-MAKING

In the production of the Folk-Plays various resources of the community are drawn upon, although most of the actual work is done by the University students in dramatic production. The School of Engineering lends expert assistance in problems of lighting, and members of the community cheerfully provide furnishings and certain properties for the stage.

First a design for the stage setting must be approved, then a working model constructed, before the actual making of the scene is begun. Then the sets are painted, the costumes, furniture, and properties designed and made in the Dramatic Laboratory.

About four weeks are allowed for rehearsals, which are held daily. Such is the enthusiasm of the players that there is no difficulty in securing regular and prompt attendance. The Director of The Playmakers has general supervision of the entire production with an Assistant Director in charge of each of the three plays which make up the bill.

Each player is expected to make himself up in his own rôle, such instruction being a part of the regular work in the production course.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

In the six years of their existence, The Playmakers have produced thirty-eight of their own plays, representing a wide variety of scenes, themes, and characters. Besides the plays included in the two volumes of *Carolina Folk-Plays* a number of others have ap-

peared in *Poet-Lore, The Drama, The Theatre Arts Magazine* and other periodicals, and in various collections of one-act plays.

The Carolina Playmakers is a fellowship of young playwrights, players, and craftsmen in stage-arts, united by a common interest in the establishment of a native folk-theater. The only requirement for membership is an active participation in the work of playmaking—whether it be in the writing, the acting, or in any of the departments of play-making. The nucleus of the organization is the Producing Staff which plans the work and shapes the policy.

The business of The Playmakers is directed by Mr. George V. Denny who, as a freshman in the University, created the rôle of Jake, the railroad engineer, in *When Witches Ride*. Since his first appearance in the initial performance of The Playmakers, Mr. Denny has played many parts with distinction, and he is now a member of the University faculty, having charge of the course in Dramatic Production. Mr. Denny has planned and managed the State Tours from the first, and the business success of the organization is due largely to his foresight and judgment.

THE STATE TOURS

This season The Playmakers have completed their eighth tour of the State, taking the plays back to the people—often to the very locality in which they originated. The itinerary of the First State Tour, five years ago, included only seven of the larger towns. In the season just closed we have played to approxi-

mately twenty-five thousand people in twenty-six North Carolina towns and cities—in the mountain country, in the Piedmont section, in the tidewater region. Seven hundred people came through the rain from isolated hill-farms to the new consolidated school building at Candler—a mountain settlement with scarcely a dozen inhabitants in the village proper—to witness our Playmaker performance. In the big auditorium at Raleigh we played to an audience of three thousand school teachers from every cove and corner of the State, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the North Carolina Educational Association. In the fashionable tourist resorts of Asheville and Pinehurst; in the teeming industrial cities of Winston-Salem and Durham; in the historic villages of Edenton, Hillsboro and Scotland Neck; and in the remote hamlet in the hills, we find the same eager audiences for our theater-of-the-folk.

The *Carolina Folk-Plays* have caught the popular imagination, and the coming of the little troupe is heralded far and wide. They are hailed as "Carolina's Own." Of *The Black Rooster,* a country comedy by Pearl Setzer, *The Raleigh Times* observes, "It reflected a bit of the life of North Carolina to-day—not only typical of Miss Setzer's hill-country, Catawba County, but of practically every rural section of the state." W. O. Saunders, editor of the *Elizabeth City Independent,* writes, "The home folks took to the home-made drama as to home-made sausage and corn-cakes on a frosty morning." The reviewer of the *Greensboro Daily News* says, *"Fixin's* presented a scene of such stark and terrible reality as to make at

least one person in the audience want to rise up and say, 'This thing has got to be stopped.'" In the *Charlotte Observer,* the dramatic critic hails the plays "as much a part of North Carolina as its pine forests, its mountains and its soil." And the editor of the *Daily Free Press* at Kinston, sums it all up with a rousing, "Let's have more of them!"

A THEATER OF THE PEOPLE

We frequently play to capacity houses and often sell standing room. In New Bern last season I remember we sold sixty-one dollars' worth of standing room and were obliged to turn them away. In one town we played this season—and that too a county seat—we were told that ours was the first "show" which had come to the town in six years. They packed the School Auditorium, gave us a big banquet after the play and said, "Now you must come back to us every year." This is an instance of the actual need for wholesome dramatic fare in our drama-starved communities.

Our Eighth State Tour, last spring, through the mountains of western North Carolina was made in a big white automobile coach, designated THE PLAYMAKER'S SPECIAL. This provided very comfortable accommodations for our troupe of twenty players and their baggage. Trailing behind THE PLAYMAKERS' SPECIAL came the other car of our little caravan—a Henry Ford truck for hauling our home-made stage equipment, all compactly crated, even to

the little box containing our only piece of live property, the black rooster, indispensable to the performance of the play of that name.

It was a luxurious mode of travel, in marked contrast with that pioneer tour the Director made in June, 1906 with that first band of Dakota Playmakers,[1] often spending hours at junction points waiting for the "accommodation" train to take them to the little prairie town at the end of the branch line.

How different—barn-storming over eight hundred miles of the treeless Dakota plains, and now riding in royal fashion over the hills and through the valleys of the Blue Ridge, blossoming with dogwood and flaming with the Judas trees of a Carolina Spring. Then the players drew lots to see who would peddle hand-bills to advertise our arrival in the town; now, announced by three-sheet posters in gay colors, and by high praise in the local newspapers our coming is like a triumphal entry!

In the hill-town of Lincolnton we mere met by a procession of automobiles decorated with Carolina flags and banners, and escorted through the Main Street to the accompaniment of tooting horns and vociferous applause. And in other towns we were welcomed with twenty-foot streamers strung across the street—as in Asheville and in Morganton—bearing the inscription WELCOME CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS.

---

[1] The beginnings and growth of the folk-playmaking work at the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, and the founding of The Dakota Playmakers there, is set forth in my Introduction to the first volume of *Carolina Folk-Plays*.

A BUREAU OF COMMUNITY DRAMA

Out of the interest in a folk-theater, awakened by the activities of The Playmakers, arose a state-wide demand for guidance in dramatic expression. To meet this demand, The Bureau of Community Drama was organized by the Director of the Playmakers, five years ago, as a unit of the Extension Division of the University. A play-book service was inaugurated, bulletins containing selected lists of plays, practical instruction in play-production and in the construction of stage equipment, and study courses in the modern drama were sent out. Personal advice was sought and given. There was an increasing demand, and the facilities were enlarged as rapidly as practicable to meet the need.

The Extension Library now contains over a thousand volumes of plays which are in constant use. Now a dramatic director is available to visit any community in North Carolina, to give assistance in the staging of plays, and in the writing and production of pageants and festivals. There is no fee for such service, only the actual expenses of travel and entertainment of the visiting director.

The work out in the State was carried on for the first four years by two of the most talented members of the Playmakers' group, Elizabeth A. Lay, and Elizabeth M. Taylor. The present state representative of the Bureau is Ethel Theodora Rockwell, a director of wide experience and national reputation in writing and producing community drama. Next year she will be

assisted in the field work by Pearl Setzer, one of our most able Playmakers.

THE CAROLINA DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION

The most significant development of the past year is the formation of The Carolina Dramatic Association, and the Annual Dramatic Institute. The purpose of the Association is: "To promote and encourage dramatic art in the schools and communities of North Carolina; to meet the need for genuinely constructive recreation; to coöperate in the production of plays, pageants and festivals of artistic worth; and to stimulate interest in the writing of native drama." The Bureau of Community Drama has general supervision of the activities of the Association, and plans the Annual Dramatic Institute and Spring Festival each year.

The First Dramatic Institute was attended by seventy-five delegates, representing dramatic groups in various parts of the State. The Carolina Playmakers presented for the Institute a bill of their new folk-plays; Miss Rockwell staged two plays, using the Chapel Hill High School Players in a Spring Festival; there were illustrated lectures, demonstrations of stage arts, and friendly discussions. Altogether it was an exceedingly profitable and inspiring meeting.

Next year a series of state-wide contests will be arranged by the Association, and a State Dramatic Competition will be held at Chapel Hill at the time of the annual meeting. In these ways the foundations

are being securely laid, in the building of a real people's theater for North Carolina.

THE STATE THEATER

To the time of this writing, all the *Carolina Folk-Plays* have been produced in the Auditorium of the Chapel Hill School Building, there being no auditorium of the campus suitable for dramatic purposes. We have been struggling with the greatest handicaps, with the limitations of a make-shift stage, and meager space behind the scenes. But now a hope of the organization is about to be fulfilled. A year ago the Trustees of the University assigned perhaps the most beautiful of our historic buildings,—a structure of classic design —as a permanent home for our Carolina drama.

So far, we have been able to utilize the building only as a dramatic laboratory, for scene painting and for the construction of stage equipment. Recently the Trustees have generously appropriated twenty-five thousand dollars for the remodeling of the building as The Playmakers' Theater.

We are planning to make this theater a model for town-theaters throughout the State. It will serve as an experimental stage, not only for us, but also for other workers in the field. Here the directors from the little town-theaters may come for assistance in solving their problems in stagecraft. Here they may find fresh ideas to take back with them to their own groups. For it is the desire of The Playmakers that their theater at Chapel Hill may become a radial center for the dramatic activities of all North Carolina.

A PLAYMAKERS' REPERTORY COMPANY

The demands for the appearance of The Carolina Playmakers have far exceeded our ability to meet them with the limited time the student-players may be away from Chapel Hill. To meet this need the University contemplates the establishment of a State Repertory Company to give to all North Carolina a drama of its own making, and to give its most talented Playmakers an opportunity for further study and achievement in dramatic arts, beyond the period of their student life. To such Broadway can offer but a slender chance of success. Here they may have the assurance of making a living; an opportunity to do the thing they most desire to do; and at the same time to satisfy the real need of their own people for vicarious expression in the theater.

TO OTHER STATES

The work of The Carolina Playmakers is but a part of the larger movement toward a new American folk-theater. The promise of the simple beginnings of The Dakota Playmakers at the University of North Dakota in 1905 has been abundantly realized in the further development of the work there, under the leadership of Professor Franz Rickaby, who was associated with the Founder, before he departed to transplant the idea of folk playmaking to the South.[1]

---

[1] A collection of *Dakota Playmaker Plays,* written by Professor Rickaby's students, was published by Walter H. Baker, Boston, in 1923. A number of separate *Playmaker*

From The Dakota Playmakers went Arthur Cloetingh to be Professor of Dramatic Art and founder of the Penn State Players in Pennsylvania State College. While most of Professor Cloetingh's attention has been given to training directors, several plays of Pennsylvania folk have been written by his students, and he is now emphasizing this phase of the work. Professor Rickaby has gone to Pomona College in California, where his students have written and staged original plays of California life, The Dakota Playmakers' work continuing under the direction of Professor E. D. Schoenberger.

Although The Carolina Playmakers have been established but a few years, already one of their number, Hubert Heffner, two years ago made a distinct contribution at the University of Wyoming in the formation of The Wyoming Playmakers and the production of a number of Wyoming folk-plays. Mr. Heffner [1] is now a member of the English faculty at the University of Arizona, and at the present moment is making his plans for launching The Arizona Playmakers out there at Tucson next year.

Unique in the Playmaker personnel is Mr. Cheng-

Plays, The Arneberg Prize Plays, have been published by the University of North Dakota; one of the plays, *The Diabolical Circle,* by Beulah Bornstead, is included in Lewis' *Contemporary One-Act Plays,* published by Scribner's.

[1] Besides being the author of *"Dod Gast Ye Both!"* in the first volume of *Carolina Folk-Plays,* Mr. Heffner distinguished himself on our Playmakers Stage as a character actor of outstanding talent.

Chin Hsiung, of Nan Chang, China, who came to the University of North Carolina for graduate study last year. Here he wrote two plays based on folk-tales of old China—*The Thrice-Promised Bride,* and *The Marvelous Romance of Wen Chun-Chin,*[1] exhibiting a naivete of imagination and a freshness of phrase which our young American playwrights may well emulate. As this goes to press Mr. Hsiung is making his departure for his native land, enthusiastic in his plans for the establishment of a Chinese folk-theater there.

TOWARD A FOLK THEATER

So the influences of the Playmakers of the people are being extended beyond the borders of Dakota and of Carolina. They may yet find their way into every state and into every community. The Editor of *The American Review of Reviews* (September, 1919), has interpreted the work of our Playmakers in North Carolina in its larger significance: "When every community has its own native group of plays and producers we shall have a national American Theater that will give

---

[1] *The Thrice-Promised Bride* was published in *The Theater Arts Magazine* for October 1923; *The Marvelous Romance of Wen Chun-Chin* will be included in the Summer Number of *Poet Lore,* 1924. *The Thrice-Promised Bride* has been successfully produced in Carmel, California; in New York, and in Boston. The Playmakers will produce *The Marvelous Romance of Wen Chun-Chin* next season. *The Thrice-Promised Bride* will be included in a volume of international drama which Frank Shay is preparing.

a richly varied, authentic expression of American life. We shall be aware—which we are only dimly at present—of the actual pulse of the people by the expression in folk-plays of their coördinated minds. It is this common vision, this collective striving that determines nationalism, and remains throughout the ages, the one and only touchstone of the future."

Toward this goal we must strive in the making of the American Folk Theater of the Future.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

June 27, 1924.

CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

TRISTA [1]

A Play of Folk Superstition

By

Elizabeth A. Lay [2]

[1] Copyright, 1922, by The Carolina Playmakers, Inc. All rights reserved. Permission to produce this play may be secured by addressing Frederick H. Koch, Director, The Carolina Playmakers, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

[2] Now *Mrs. Paul Greene.*

THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, December 2nd and 3rd, 1921.

EPH HUNTER, *a young trader in the settlement,* Le Grand Everett

KEZZIE, *his good-natured mother,* Katharine Woodrow

GAFFER, *the old grandfather,* Hubert Heffner

DR. TRASK, *a minister of the Church of England, sent as a missionary to the Colonists,* Robert Frasier

TRISTA, *Eph's young wife,* Katherine Batts

SCENE: Eph's log-cabin home in a settlement on the North Carolina coast.

TIME: A spring night in the early Eighteenth Century, when the superstitious but lenient Southern colonists firmly believed in witchcraft.

Katherine Batts as TRISTA in *Trista*, a play of folk-superstition, by Elizabeth A. Lay.
TRISTA: See, I'll leave you my child, Gaffer. I will leave you the baby. Just let me go.
Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

SCENE

THE room is comfortable in spite of the rudeness of the house. The furniture is simple but well made, and the family possessions brought across the sea only a few years before, help to give the colonist's home a look of prosperity and comfort.

The light from the fireplace in the left wall casts dark shadows about the room, lighting but dimly the open cupboard in the corner which contains bright pewter and old blue china dishes. The bed in the right corner is covered with a hand-woven bedspread. A patchwork quilt is folded across the foot. The table, covered with a fringed cotton cloth, is in the center of the room. On it are two unlighted candles in old pewter candlesticks. There are several chairs about the table and one near the fireplace. In the right corner at the front is a spinning wheel. A cradle stands by the fireplace. A door at the right leads into another room.

A rough board door in the rear wall, to the left, opens out-of-doors. The latch-hole is stopped with a cotton rag and, in place of the latch, a fastening has been contrived from a wooden peg and staple. Through the small open window over the bed there may be seen a glimpse of budding trees against a

starry sky. When the door at the rear is open the new moon may be seen and the far-off line of the river.

When the curtain rises, KEZZIE, *a placid-looking middle-aged woman, is sitting by the fire rocking the cradle with her foot and humming an old psalm tune. She wears a plain dress of homespun and a white apron. Her knitting lies in her lap but she is too nervous to work on it. She glances anxiously at the door and at the child, to be sure he is asleep. Then she rises and goes softly to the cupboard to get some dishes from it. There is a sound of shuffling footsteps outside.* KEZZIE *goes quickly to the door and opens it.* GAFFER *enters.*

He is bent and shriveled—a pitiably feeble old man. He has long hair and a long white beard which nearly covers his face. His clothes of homespun are disorderly, his short trousers baggy, and he holds an old shawl tightly about his shoulders and advances feebly, leaning on a cane and appearing not to see KEZZIE. *His eyes are very bright and glisten with the unearthly expression of one who imagines he sees strange things.*

GAFFER

(*Mumbling*)

Trouble, trouble, trouble. . . .

KEZZIE

(*Coming closer to him and speaking anxiously*)

She ain't a witch, Gaffer? What is it? The trial's over, Gaffer, is it?

GAFFER

She's a-goin' to leave us. She's a-goin' to leave us. The time's come.

KEZZIE

(*Impatiently*)

Dear life! If he was jes' right in his head! (*She turns to* GAFFER *and speaks coaxingly.*) Gaffer, the judge at the trial . . . listen, Gaffer. You rec'lect the man with the wig and the black gown. Didn't he say she's not a witch, Gaffer? Didn't he say she's not a witch?

(*She turns from him despairingly as he sits down by the fire and continues mumbling, stirring the fire with his stick.*)

GAFFER

(*Suddenly bursting out, almost sobbing*)

They say she ain't a witch, she ain't a witch.

KEZZIE

Oh, there ain't no sense in any of your words, good or bad.

GAFFER

They say she ain't. Oh, trouble, trouble, trouble!

KEZZIE

(*Lighting the candles from the fire*)

Hush, Gaffer. For shame to take on so if sech is true. We all should praise the Lord that Trista's free.

GAFFER

(*Suddenly rising*)

Oh, I've turned the dead coals in the fire an' I've turned trouble close to my heart. (*He gets up and hobbles toward the door.*) An' I've seen the new moon through the trees to-night an' it's a sure sign of evil.

KEZZIE

(*Following him to the open door*)

You cain't go out in the dampness agin this night. (*She closes the door and leads him back to the fire.*) Set down thar, Gaffer, an' be still till I change my dress a bit. They'll be comin' back from the trial an' if she's cleared they're goin' to baptize her. (*Speaking gently.*) They're goin' to baptize her, Gaffer, in the faith, jes' same's her little baby thar—hers . . . an' Eph's. (*Her voice has become almost broodingly gentle. She looks out of the window as she crosses to the right. Then she turns to the old man.*) Thar's lanterns comin' down the river now. The trial's over sure, and' I'll be learnin' the truth 'bout Trista. Set still, Gaffer, an' mind you don't wake the child.

(*She goes hurriedly into the next room.*)

GAFFER

They say she ain't a witch, an' she'll be leavin' us now. She'll ride off an' leave us, for she *is* a witch; she is a witch. An' they won't guard her now. They can't hold her here. Fools an' blind, fools

an' blind. . . . Yer mother be a witch, my child, a witch. Aye, we see it, an' we see the far-off signs —signs an' wonders! Signs an' wonders! (*He rises.*) She'll ride away, she'll ride away. An' you'll be left to grow an' work an' I'll be left to die. . . . Oh, trouble, trouble, trouble. (*He sinks back into his chair.*) There'll be no one left to see things then, an' we'll forgit, we'll forgit. . . . (*There is a pause, then he becomes wilder.*)

Will we leave yer mother ride away, will we leave her go, child? (*He laughs.*) She have eyes like an ol' man an' eyes like a child, eyes to see, eyes to see. . . . We'll hold her here, we'll hold her here. . . . (*He hobbles to the door and his face becomes crafty. He points to the latch-hole.*) While the latch-hole is stopped, child, the spell's on her an' she cain't ride away. We'll hold her here. She's a witch, a witch! . . . The spell, the spell will hold her here!

(*He stands over the child with his arms upraised in exaltation.*)

KEZZIE

(*Opens the door at the right and enters hurriedly. She has freshened her gown with an old lace collar and taken off her apron. She runs to* GAFFER.)

Gaffer, Gaffer, leave the child be! (*At her entrance* GAFFER *lowers his arms and shrinks into a chair at the back of the fireplace.* KEZZIE *pats him hastily on the shoulder.*) Now, you set down thar,

Gaffer, an' be still. (*She looks anxiously at the cradle.*) The child's still asleep, praise be!

GAFFER
(*Mumbling*)

They's signs of sorrow an' trouble. They say she ain't a witch. . . .

KEZZIE

(*Goes to the cupboard and brings out bread, ham, a jug of wine and some cakes. She places them, with some dishes, on the table. Sounds are heard of people approaching, talking cheerfully but with earnestness.* KEZZIE *runs quickly to the door and opens it, calling to some one outside.*)

Is that you, John? Tell me quick. Is . . . is the hearin' over? Is Trista . . . is she free . . . ?

(JOHN'S *voice answers.*) Yes, all over, Mistress Hunter. She's free an' Eph's a-bringin' her home from court.

(*Other voices call.*) We be thankful she's cleared. She ain't a witch.

No, an' I never was one to say it, neither. The dissenters that accused her. . . .

(*The people pass by.* KEZZIE *closes the door and comes to the table.*)

GAFFER
(*Continuing monotonously*)

They say she ain't a witch. They say she ain't a witch. . . .

(*The refrain catches the attention of* KEZZIE. *She speaks as one would to a precocious child.*)

KEZZIE

Why, so 'tis, Gaffer. (*She laughs contentedly.*) An' you knowed it. No, Trista ain't diff'rent from any of us an' the jedge has said she kin go free.

GAFFER

(*Suddenly vehement*)

Fools, fools! She is a witch! You are blind, blind!

KEZZIE

(*Reprovingly*)

No, no she ain't, Gaffer. An' now you hush. (*She leans close to him as though trying to make him understand.*) Let's leave her forget all them strange notions of her'n an' be jes' like other folks now. . . . You been talkin' craziness to her 'nough to make her turn quair, too. ~~Nobody believes she's any bag!~~ (*As* GAFFER *continues she takes the easiest way of silencing him.*) Here, Gaffer, take this piece of bread an' eat it an' be still. (GAFFER *refuses.*) Well, be still then, anyways.

(*She moves about the room setting the table. Sounds of footsteps and voices are heard outside and she goes quickly to the door.* EPH *enters with* TRISTA, *supporting her.*

He is a good-natured young man of about thirty, rather earnest and matter-of-fact. His

face is good and honest, though commonplace in expression. He has the appearance of a man who has succeeded and will settle into a comfortable middle age. He wears clothes, evidently his best, neat but not handsome.

TRISTA *is a tall, lithe girl. There is something elfin in her graceful figure. Her face is too thin to be beautiful but her eyes have an unearthly look about them which makes them seem almost too large. Her expression is wistful and hauntingly sweet, sometimes desperate like that of a hunted wild thing, sometimes wearied and hopeless. Her straight fine hair is drawn loosely back into a heavy coil at the back of the head. She wears a gown of homespun and a long gold chain of strange design. When she enters she is completely hidden by a cloak with a pointed hood.*

DR. TRASK *enters behind them. He is a mild-looking man, rather small. He wears clothes of dark color, with a white stock, and a bright-colored waistcoat. His hat is a flat-brimmed, clerical hat, but the rest of his costume is that of any gentleman of the time.*)

KEZZIE

(*Going joyfully to* TRISTA, *she kisses her and leads her into the room. She turns to* DR. TRASK)

Come in, Dr. Trask. You've brung us a blessin', sir.

DR. TRASK
(*Bowing*)

Mistress Hunter! You stood godmother to the child last Sabbath. Yes, indeed, I remember.

KEZZIE

'Tis good to see you again, sir, at such a time.

EPH

Ma, Trista should rest a spell now, afore the baptizin'. She's that tired out.

KEZZIE

Yes, Eph. She'll want to freshen up a bit. You'll excuse us, sir. 'Twon't be long.

DR. TRASK

We would wait until another day for the baptism, Mistress Hunter, but I must leave for Virginia in the morning. They are expecting me there for services.

KEZZIE

Jest come in here, Trista, with me.

(*She turns to* TRISTA *who was standing listlessly beside her a moment ago, but has slipped away now and crossed to the cradle where she stands staring down at the child, a worried expression on her face. She does not hear* KEZZIE *nor rouse from her reverie until* KEZZIE *crosses to her and takes her hand. Then she looks up in terror. She shrinks down*

over the cradle shielding her child with one arm. As KEZZIE *takes her hand she looks at her with a blank expression for a moment, then seems to come to herself and follows listlessly into the next room.*

EPH *has been helping* DR. TRASK *remove his cloak. He now goes over to the cradle and looks at the child.*)

DR. TRASK

(*Following* EPH *to the fireplace*)

And this is your only child? The one I baptized last Sabbath?

EPH

Yes, sir. We been waitin' an' hopin' a minister of the Established Church 'd come to the settlement an' now you've come. But it's been five year since the last one was here. Trista an' me was married by the jedge three years a-gone.

DR. TRASK

She has never been baptized, you say?

EPH

No, sir, not unless it were before she come to us an' she don't never speak o' that time. It's like she's forgot it all.

KEZZIE

(*Entering*)

Trista'll be ready soon. She wants to be alone a

while. Eph, ain't you even asked Dr. Trask to have some supper? He must be hungry.

DR. TRASK

No, I thank you. I have already supped.

KEZZIE

I've had my bite to eat, too. Eph, you'll want to wait for Trista. Set down, Dr. Trask. You must have had a tedious day.

(KEZZIE *sits down at the right of the table,* DR. TRASK *at the back.* GAFFER *in his corner mumbles unnoticed.* EPH *stands awkwardly, oppressed by the difficulty of expressing his thanks to the preacher.*)

EPH

(*Very sincerely*)

There's . . . Dr Trask . . . there's no ways I can say how to thank you for what you done for us this day. The folks hereabouts has never been terrible bitter in accusin' Trista of servin' the Devil—like the dissenters in some places. But we thought it was best to have her brought to trial to lay the talkin' for good an' all . . . an' you examinin' her an' . . .

KEZZIE

They's nothin' they can say agin' her now—now that a minister of the gospel has examined her before the court an' the jedge has said she ain't a witch.

DR. TRASK

It's been a blessed privilege to be able to examine her, and to clear her from this charge, my good friends. And, when she's joined God's church, she'll have no cause to be thought of but as all godly women of this colony. . . . You people have been true to her from the first, I hear.

EPH

(*Speaking resolutely, after a pause*)

It's right, sir, for me to tell you as how when she fust come we *all* thought she's here through some spell . . . that . . .

DR. TRASK

You didn't believe yourself that she was a servant of the Devil?

KEZZIE

God forgive us. We thought she's a witch.

DR. TRASK

What is that? The working of the dissenters! 'Tis no wonder that such superstitions should flourish in Salem and in all *New* England, but in Carolina and among the members of the Established Church! (*Almost sternly.*) I fear this settlement is indeed in sad want of spiritual guidance, of a minister from England. . . . When I set forth for America they told me of the many ungodly dangers I should encounter in my ministering journeys among the colonists. Ah,

it is true. . . . Tell me, you believed this maid . . . your wife now. . . .

EPH

(*Sitting down. He speaks wonderingly*)

It does 'pear strange-like now. 'Twas on account of the quair way she come to us.

DR. TRASK

How was it I did not hear of that?

KEZZIE

We ain't talked of it to others. But it all come through Gaffer, my old father thar, sir. He went out'n his head in the great sickness on the ship, when we come across the water from England, an' he ain't been right since.

DR. TRASK

He found the girl?

KEZZIE

Yes, sir. The way she come did seem right quair then. . . . Three years a-gone it was. . . . One night he was in that thar bed, sir. We was all asleep, when he screamed out mos' fearful like. We both come runnin' in here, Eph an' me, an' Gaffer was a-babblin' that a witch had been a-hantin' him and that he'd stopped up the latch-hole an' done kotched her. The witch couldn't get out 'cept by the key-hole, he said, an' he'd done kotched her with the

stoppin' of it. We heared a moanin' sound an' somethin' beatin' on the door soft-like. Gaffer cried out that it was a witch, an' we was a-feared, I can tell you. But Eph brung a light—an' thar was Trista . . . a-faintin' by the door!

EPH

She was that faint an' poor we all pitied her, an' we took to carin' the world an' all about her. Gaffer allus talked about her bein' a witch. But he follows her 'roun' an' won't hardly let her get out'n his sight.

KEZZIE

He talks about her bein' a witch, an' ridin' off some day if we don't watch out. He takes on so, we allus have kep' the latch-hole stopped to keep the spell on her. It's been jes' like you see it now, sir, stopped up. An' somehow . . . I sorter . . . It's quair, but I sorter feel it's safer.

DR. TRASK

But she is no witch.

EPH

We did believe she was, sir. But ma an' me—we couldn't turn her out, even so.

KEZZIE

She was lost an' sick an' dazed-like, an' we didn't know what to think of the strange things she'd talk on and the spells she'd have.

EPH

Even after she got right in her head she couldn't say jes' how she come. But thar was a ship come into harbor down the river that same night, an' we 'lowed she'd come across the seas on that. She must 'a' lost herself, an' wandered in the door. It's like the long sea voyage turned her mind in the sickness, like it done Gaffer. Some folks allus said thar was somethin' quair 'bout Gaffer's allus babblin' o' spells an' sech. She'd talk about seein' things same as he do, an' we all thought she's a witch. . . . But then . . . I married her, spite of all.

DR. TRASK

You truly believed she was a witch? Believed she was a servant of the Devil?

EPH

Well, she was so harmless-like, an' jes' that sweet an' purty an' good. . . . I dunno how I ever thought she's a witch.

KEZZIE

Eph 'lowed he had to have her, witch or no. An' they ain't a sweeter nor a purtier gal in all the river settlements, after she got by havin' spells. Then we knowed she's all right. I've prayed forgiveness that I ever thought she's a witch.

DR. TRASK

(*Musing*)

'Tis a sad tale of unholy beliefs. But she is cleared

now before God and the law. That is all past. And there is no need for such charms as the stopped latch-hole. 'Tis wicked.

KEZZIE
(*Protesting*)

Ah, 'tis only a notion.

EPH
(*Rather shamefaced*)

'Twas stopped up to keep her here, sir, the night I fust saw her. I have a feelin' . . . an' surely 'tain't no harm—

DR. TRASK
(*Rising and speaking sternly*)

No, my friends, these practices must be stopped. 'Tis acknowledging the rule of witchcraft in this house. 'Tis tempting God to punish. The young Mistress Hunter is no servant of the Devil. She is like all the other wives of the Colony, and needeth only her duty as wife and mother to hold her here. This unholy sign must be removed at once, before I may baptize her into the fold, according to God's Holy Word!

EPH
(*Convinced and penitent*)

'Twas a sin, sir; I see it now. (*He rises.*) But Gaffer thar—

(*He starts toward the door.* GAFFER, *who*

Scene from *Trista,* a play of folk-superstition, by Elizabeth A. Lay. TRISTA (Katharine Batts): KEZZIE (Katharine Woodrow); GAFFER (Hubert Heffner); DR. TRASK (Robert Frasier); EPH HUNTER (LeGrand Everett).

GAFFER: She is a witch, a witch. Don't loose her. She'll ride away, she'll ride away. She'll be gone!

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

has been watching them intently, intercepts him.)

GAFFER

(*Hysterically*)

She'll be gone; she'll be gone. She'll ride away from us all. She's a witch, she's a witch!

DR. TRASK

(*Commanding, his hand on the latch-hole*)

Stand aside, old man!

KEZZIE

(*Pleading to the minister*)

Don't cross him, sir, in his notions. He's that fond of Trista; an' he takes a deal of store in his charms an' sech. But he's old an' crazed an' he'll soon forget. Jes' wait a bit.

GAFFER

(*Wildly, as he throws himself against the door, with appealing eyes to the minister*)

The old an' young can see, can see. But they forgits, they forgits.

KEZZIE

You see how he talks, sir. (*At this moment the door at the right opens and* TRISTA *enters. She wears now a gown of rich but faded silk. The same gold chain is around her neck. There is a look of wistful hopefulness in her face.* EPH *goes quickly to her,*

and leads her to a chair at the table. KEZZIE *speaks to* DR. TRASK *as he turns from the door.*) You won't eat a bite, Dr. Trask? (*He shakes his head, bowing.*) Then would you please to come in here, sir? There's fresh water an' you'll want to see what vessel to use.

EPH

You'll pardon us if we eat a bit first, sir. Trista's that weak an' faint.

KEZZIE

Be quick, son. It's a long journey Dr. Trask has before him in the morning.

(*She and the preacher go out at the right.* EPH *closes the door behind them, then turns to* TRISTA *who has risen and is looking at him as if searching for something lost.*)

EPH

(*Reprovingly*)

Trista, why do you wear that gown?

TRISTA

Why, 'tis my prettiest gown, Eph . . . an' besides . . . I wore it when we were married, Eph.

(*She speaks softly.*)

EPH

But it minds me of the time when you fust come here; when you used to see strange sights an' we all thought you's . . .

TRISTA

(*Quickly*)

But, Eph, you married me even so an' . . .

(*She goes toward him.*)

EPH

We must put them things by, Trista, with the thoughts of those old days.

(TRISTA *goes to the window and stands gazing out at the moonlight.*)

TRISTA

Those old days!

GAFFER

(*Moaning, as he bends over the fire*)

There's no rest, there's no rest! Fools and blind! Fools and blind. . . .

EPH

(*Sitting at the table*)

Hush, Gaffer, you'll wake the child. (TRISTA *walks listlessly to the door, opens it and looks out.* EPH *sees her and turns around from the plate of food at the table. He speaks impatiently.*) Trista, come eat your supper, an' don't keep Dr. Trask waitin'. (TRISTA *does not move from the door.* EPH *speaks more gently.*) Ain't you hungry, Trista? . . . Trista!

TRISTA

(*In an expressionless voice*)

No. (*There is silence for a moment, then* TRISTA,

with a swift movement, runs to EPH *and puts her hands on his shoulders. There is a thrill in her voice.*) Eph, Eph! (*She seems transformed.*) Eph, come with me! Come out into the night, Eph, where the moon is making pathways on the river. Eph, the wind is calling—Hear! . . . and the clouds are flying, flying past the moon! (*Worn out by the stress of her emotion, she drops to her knees beside him. He bends over her, trying to quiet her.*) Eph, Eph, where are you? You used to love to go with me . . . an' now . . . an' now . . .

(*She sinks down on the floor.*)

EPH

There, there, child. Forget all them quair notions. Why, I'm here, Trista,—an' there's your little baby, child.

(*He leads her over to the cradle. She kneels and gazes at the baby with a troubled look.* EPH *goes back to the table and brings her some bread which she refuses.*)

TRISTA

What is it? What have you done to my child?

EPH

There, there, Trista. Be still an' rest.

GAFFER

(*As* EPH *resumes his seat*)

Only the young and the old kin see strange sights, an' they forgits, they forgits.

(TRISTA *rises and goes softly and swiftly to the door. As* EPH *turns and sees her, she speaks.*)

TRISTA

I'm goin' down to the river, Eph.

EPH

No, you ain't, child. It's too cool. You ain't goin' to look at the river to-night. (*Trying to lead her back to the table.*) Come an' set here with me.

TRISTA

I've got to go out, Eph. . . . Just a piece of the way.

EPH

(*Emphatically*)

No, you ain't, Trista. You got to forgit them there quair notions now. They ain't nothin' to see, nohow.

(*He shuts the door.* TRISTA *crosses to the window and stands looking out.*)

GAFFER

(*Mumbling*)

Fools and blind . . . fools and blind. . . .

TRISTA

It's just . . . just the new moon shinin' on the river, Eph. You seem to think it's nothin' to look at now.

EPH

I kin look at the moon an' tell the weather that's comin', but that's all thar is in it. You don't see all them strange things you used to talk on, an' it's time you forgot 'bout 'em. It's wrong to think on sech things.

TRISTA

Oh, Eph, you didn't use to think it wrong to look at the starlight on the river. You used to love to . . .

EPH

(*Laughing shamefacedly*)

That's 'cause I liked to look at you, child. But now we don't have to go out in the night. I kin set here an' see you, an' we don't need to be goin' down by the river. (TRISTA *runs to the door and throws her arms out longingly towards the stars.* EPH *turns.*) Don't, Trista, don't! (*He closes the door.*) Hit's bad luck to look at the new moon through the trees.

(*He leads her to the fire.*)

GAFFER

(*Mumbling*)

Bad luck for some is good luck for others.

EPH

(*Gently*)

You're tired out, child. You jes' set still an'

rest. I'il go fetch the minister, Trista, so you kin go to bed soon.

(*As he goes out,* TRISTA *follows him with outstretched arms, but he does not see her. As the door swings shut behind him,* TRISTA *throws herself against it with a wild little sobbing cry.*)

TRISTA

Eph, Eph, come back, Eph, an' tell me we can see wonders together! (*Dully.*) He's gone, he's gone. He said I must be just like the rest now. (*She goes over to the child and looks down, troubled. Then she drops on her knees, speaking to* GAFFER.) Gaffer, Gaffer, what has happened? My baby, my child! The beauty and the strangeness is gone. He'll be just like the others, they say. And then he'll sit in by the fire and sing psalm tunes, and never gaze at the stars and the river and . . . Gaffer. (*She rises and speaks close to his ear.*) Gaffer, let me out, let me out!

GAFFER

(*Unheeding*)

The new moon has brought trouble, trouble.

TRISTA

Quick, Gaffer, let me out. (*She leans closer and speaks compellingly.*) Unstop the latch-hole, Gaffer. Take off the spell and let me go. . . . See, I will give you my gold chain, Gaffer. Just let me go.

GAFFER

The witches are ridin' and dancin' and shriekin', but one is not there, one is not there. . . .

TRISTA

I cannot stay here. I . . . I . . . (*She sinks on her knees before the cradle.*) See, I'll leave you my child, Gaffer. I will leave you the baby, just let me go.

GAFFER

The river is shinin' . . . an' shinin' . . . an' shinin' . . . but she cannot go, she cannot go!

TRISTA

I must go. I'll die here. I'll die! They say I am just like the rest. They are blind. They cannot see what I am. . . . (*Wildly.*) I am a witch. I must go! (*She darts to the door,* GAFFER *following. There she stops as though hurled back by some strange force. She cowers.*) The spell, the spell! (*She clings to* GAFFER.) Oh, unstop the latch-hole, Gaffer. I am a witch. I cannot stay here longer. (*Slowly she sinks down by the door.*) Eph sees me like one of the rest and I'll die if I stay. He loved me for a witch, and now they say I am just like . . . Oh, I'll die here.

GAFFER

Love dies when the wonder is gone, aye, love dies. But we hold her still. The latch-hole is stopped.

The witch-mother shall not leave us alone in the night . . . alone . . . alone. . . .

(EPH *enters quickly from the next room and goes to* TRISTA.)

EPH

Trista! What ails you, Trista? Trista, speak!

KEZZIE

(*Entering, followed by* DR. TRASK)

Gaffer has frightened her. (*She leads him to his seat.*) It do try me how foolish he be! Come here, Gaffer, an' set down.

(EPH *has knelt by* TRISTA. *She rises, very pale.*)

EPH

Thar, now. 'Tis all over now.

(*He leads her to a chair at the fireplace.*)

KEZZIE

She's that weak from the trial, sir.

DR. TRASK

We shall have the services at once, then. (*They start toward the door of the bedroom.* GAFFER *has crept over to the stopped latch again.* DR. TRASK *sees him.*) But first, unstop the latch-hole, Mistress Hunter. 'Tis not right that such signs of the dominion of darkness should be seen at this time. We have no witch here nor need for strange spells.

EPH

Oh, sir, 'twill do no harm, but . . . (*He goes to the door.*) as you say, there is no need for spells to hold Trista. She's no different from us all.

(TRISTA, *near the fireplace, watches intently. As* EPH *puts out his hand to the latch-hole,* GAFFER *throws himself against the door.*)

GAFFER

She is a witch, a witch. Don't loose her. She'll ride away, she'll ride away. She'll be gone!

KEZZIE

He's out'n his mind, sir. (*She goes to* GAFFER, *trying to soothe him.*)

(TRISTA *watches them intently, while she moves, unnoticed, to the table.*)

GAFFER

She'll ride off on the winds and clouds and she'll never come again. The new moon's a-shinin' an' the witches are a-ridin' an' she'll never come again . . . she'll never come again. . . .

EPH

Oh, hush, Gaffer. Be still.

(*He reaches out and unstops the keyhole. At that instant,* TRISTA *utters a wild cry and falls forward, dragging the tablecloth with her to the floor. The candles are extinguished.*

In the darkness the people are heard groping about.)

KEZZIE

Where is she? Has she fainted? Trista!

EPH

I felt something touch me! Trista! The door —where is she?

GAFFER

She's gone, she's gone. . . . And she'll never come again. . . .

EPH

I can't find her. (*Desperately.*) Trista! (*He lights the candle from the coals of the fire and stands with it held over his head. He speaks in dumb wonderment.*) She is gone!

KEZZIE

But the door is shut. What . . . What . . .

DR. TRASK

Oh, heaven protect us all. "From all evil and mischief, from wrath, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, good Lord, deliver us."

EPH

(*Repeating dully*)

She's gone. I let her go.

GAFFER

Only the old folks and the very young kin see strange things an' they forgits, they forgits. . . .

(*He sinks down by the cradle.*)

CURTAIN

THE RETURN OF BUCK GAVIN [1]

The Tragedy of a Mountain Outlaw

By

Thomas Clayton Wolfe

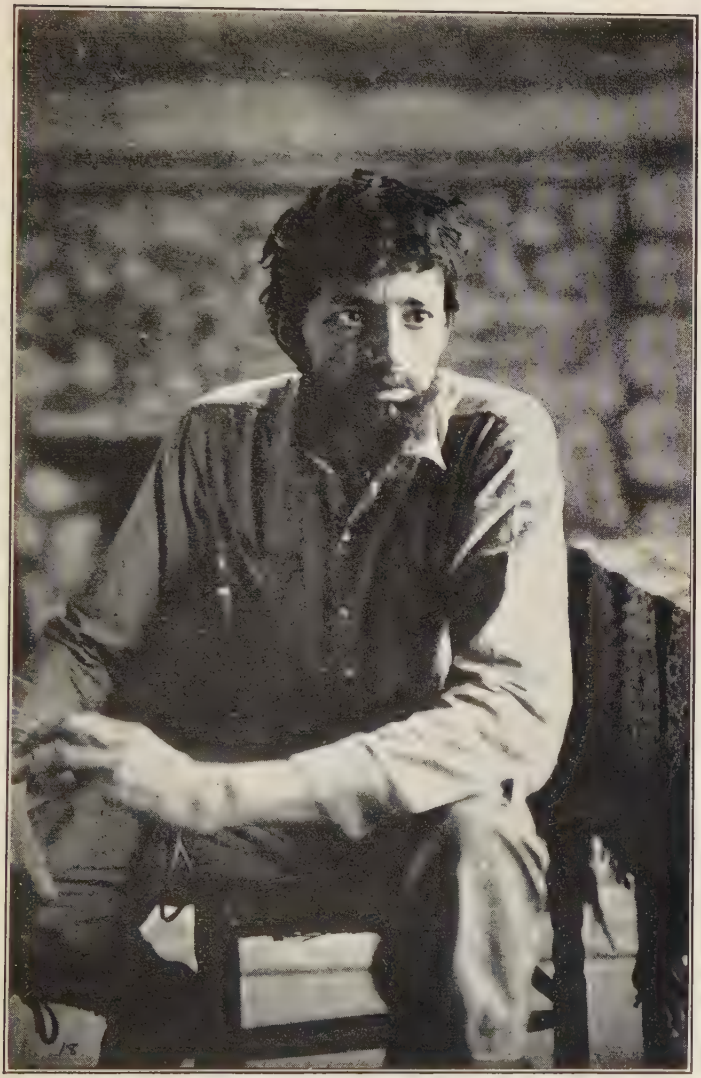
[1] Copyright, 1922, by The Carolina Playmakers, Inc. All rights reserved. Permission to produce this play may be secured by addressing Frederick H. Koch, Director, The Carolina Playmakers, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, March 14th and 15th, 1919.

BUCK GAVIN, *a mountain outlaw,* Thomas Clayton Wolfe
MARY GAVIN, *his sister,* Lelia Nance Moffatt
THE SHERIFF, Frederick Cohn

SCENE: The cabin home of Buck Gavin in a remote cove of the Carolina mountains.
TIME: The present. An afternoon in May.



Thomas Clayton Wolfe as BUCK GAVIN in his own play, *The Return of Buck Gavin.*

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

SCENE

THE living and dining room of the log cabin home of BUCK GAVIN.

The furnishings of the room are more pretentious than are usually associated with mountain cabins. This is explained by the fact that GAVIN *is a mountain chief, the leader of a clan—a kind of tribal leader, if you like. The interior is rude, but comfortable, with not a little taste displayed in the arrangement. A woman's presence is denoted by blue chintz curtains at the windows and a covering of the same material on the table in the center of the room. A shaded lamp, several weekly newspapers, and a knitting basket are on the table. At the left a crackling wood-fire burns in a large stone fireplace. In the right corner is a home-made cupboard. Skins are tacked to the wall here and there. The garish lithographic display usually found in mountain cabins is lacking here. Several hand-made, splint-bottom chairs are grouped around the hearth. The outside door is in the rear wall at the center, with small windows on either side of it. In the right wall is another door, leading into the bedroom and thence into the kitchen shed. There is a rocker by the table.*

MARY GAVIN *is seated in this rocker, knitting. She has a face not old, but worn—not by toil, we*

should say, but care-worn. It is a good face—attractive, possessing a sensitiveness of feature remarkable for a mountain woman. Although she is not more than thirty-five years of age, her hair is even now streaked with gray. As she knits, her back to the door, it opens softly, slowly. A man steps quickly into the room and shuts the door as quietly as it was opened. The man is BUCK GAVIN, *master of the house, a fugitive from justice, wanted on charges of illicit distilling and murder. He has returned by stealth after being hunted for six weeks.*

BUCK GAVIN *is a great, powerfully built fellow, aged forty years, or thereabouts. He has a strong, heavily-lined face, covered by a beard of the Van Dyke type—although he would not call it that. He has piercing black eyes and heavy black hair. In his swift silent movements there is a suggestion of a veiled panther-like power. This seems characteristic of him; he moves always with the same decisiveness. He is dressed in a dark flannel shirt and loose corduroy trousers stuffed into rough laced boots.*

GAVIN

(*Stands quietly a moment surveying the scene; then he speaks casually, quietly*)

Howdy, sis.

MARY

(*Springing from her chair and turning quickly*)

Buck! Buck! My God! What air you doin' here? Why did you come back?

GAVIN
(*Simply*)

I had to, sis.

MARY

But, my Lor', man, they've been lookin' fer you high an' low. There's nary a nook ner corner 'bout these hills they haven't scoured fer you.

GAVIN

Don't you reckon I know it? But I come, an' thar's an end to it. (*Speaking impatiently as she starts to interrupt him.*) Don't argue with me. I come . . . an' you know why, I'm thinkin'.

MARY
(*Sullenly*)

Yeah. I calc'late I knowed why. (*Going to him.*) But 'twarn't no use, Buck, 'twarn't no use for you to risk yer neck after all's over.

GAVIN
(*With quiet emphasis*)

Thar's the rub. 'Tain't all over. There's one mo' leetle job to be done, an' I reckon I'll git to see that through . . . least-ways, I'd better. For they'd never o' caught me whar I was, an' I don't calc'late to come more'n two hundred miles jes' to be caught. I reckon they'll git me soon, anyway; they're so powerful smart.

MARY

(*Contemptuously and proudly*)

Bah! They never could o' caught you in the ol' days, Buck, no matter how powerful smart they were. You'd allus fool 'em, Buck.

GAVIN

The ol' days is gone—the good ol' days—an' all that made 'em good. But now . . . now . . . well, I'm jes' not in the foolin' mood. (*Moving away from her.*) . . . He's gone . . . they got him, an' I'd ruther that it'd been me. I reckon you know it. . . . But they got him, damn 'em, an' now . . . now . . . (*Passionately.*) Aw, what's the use? (*Striding restlessly across the room.*) A lot I'd keer if they'd come now . . . only . . . only . . . I want a leetle mo' time . . . jes' a leetle.

MARY

Buck! Buck! Perk up, man, you mustn't act this way. What's come over you?

GAVIN

Oh, don't worry 'bout me. . . . (*He speaks softly.*) Where'd you put him, Mary?

MARY

On the top o' big Smoky. You know he allus liked the view up there . . . said kind o' jokin' that that was where he wanted 'em to plant him.

GAVIN

(*Almost in a whisper*)

I . . . rec'lect.

MARY

So the rest o' the boys built a kind o' box an' carried him up there. 'Twarn't easy neither, for it's a good ten mile from the Gap to the top o' the Smoky. But we all felt sort o' like it was doin' the right thing by Jim. Allus was different, was Jim, from the rest of us. He'd have them dreamy times when he wanted to be left alone.

GAVIN

(*Sits down at the table and gazes before him*)

He was plumb foolish over the view from the Smoky. Called it a leetle bit o' God's country. Used to go up there an' stare off 'cross the valleys till the sun got low an' everythin' was blurred an' hazy-like. Didn't want to talk to no one when he got that-a-way. But one time, when we was up there, he set a-lookin' out awhile an' he turned to me an' says, says he, "Buck, this is shore purty. We're powerful close to heaven, Buck. . . ." I reckon you done the right thing to plant him there. . . . Good ol' Jim. It's 'bout all we could do. But the best warn't good 'nough fer him.

MARY

On the box we carved out his name . . . jes' carved "Jim." Somehow it seemed more nat'ral-

like to have it "Jim" than "James Preas." An' over the grave—at the head, I mean—we stuck a wooden cross that the boys made . . . an' on it we carved "Jim Preas—He asked no favors from revenooers an' he died with his boots off."

GAVIN
(*Sharply*)

What's that 'bout his boots?

MARY

Oh, that's the funny part of it. He had his leetle joke right to the end. You know he allus calc'lated he'd have his boots off when he died. Well, when the Sheriff an' his dep'ties found him, he was lyin' up agin' a rock with his boots off, with his gun in one hand, an' grinnin' a funny leetle grin as if he was sayin', "I had the last laugh, hey?"

GAVIN
(*Quietly after a pause*)

How . . . how many did we git?

MARY

Three dep'ties.

GAVIN
(*With savage satisfaction*)

Good . . . good, damn 'em, they had to pay. A lot o' good it does me, though. (*He goes on reminiscently.*) I won't forgit the fight out there on the

hill-side, an' how they got him. He gives a funny leetle cough an' crumples up an' quits pumpin' his gun. "Buck," he says, grinnin' that crooked grin of his'n, "Buck, my boy, I reckon they've settled my hash. . . . 'Tain't no use, big feller," says he when I starts to carry him, "They've got me, an' I'm done fer. You can't help me, so for God's sake, help yourself. Now git." So I left him jokin' an' grinnin' an' pumpin' lead at 'em. He was a great joker, was Jim. . . . (*They are both silent.*) Mary, I reckon I ought to git some flowers. Could you git 'em fer me?

MARY

(*Puzzled by the question*)

Why, yeah, I reckon I could. I got some here picked fresh this mornin', but what on airth d'you want . . . Buck, you can't be meanin' to go up there with 'em. Why, man alive, you cain't—they're searchin' high an' low fer you.

GAVIN

(*Doggedly*)

No matter if they air—I'm goin'. That's what I come fer.

MARY

D'you mean to tell me, Buck Gavin, that you come all this way to risk your neck fer . . . fer . . . sech? . . .

GAVIN

(*With quiet determination*)

Yeah, I mean to tell you jes' that. That's what kep' pullin' me home; that's all I hanker to do an' after that's done let 'em come an' git me . . . an' to hell with 'em.

MARY

All right, Buck, I reckon you know. I'll git 'em.

GAVIN

(*To himself*)

With his boots off, hey? (*He sits down at the table.*) By cripes, that was like him, jes' like ol' Jim. Allus was a joker. (*He chuckles.*) I reckon that tickled him. Oh, Lord, that was a man fer you!

(*He rises and strides across the room.*)

MARY

(*Returning with a large bunch of arbutus*)

Reckon these'll do, Buck?

GAVIN

Guess so—too many, though. Here, le' me have 'em, I'll fix 'em. Say, how 'bout some vi'lets, got any? Jim was plumb daffy over 'em—the big blue uns. You know the kind, Mary?

MARY

I know where they's a sight of 'em. I'll go git 'em. 'Twon't take long.

(*She goes out.*)

GAVIN

(*Sitting by the table, he speaks disjointedly as he arranges the flowers*)

No, an' 'twon't take long fer you either, Gavin, my boy. . . . Your goose is 'bout cooked, I'm thinkin'. Fine way of cookin', too. Jim's was the right way after all. . . . Wish I'd stayed with him now. A purty sight I'll be with a noose 'round my gullet—first Gavin to be hung—a disgrace to the family. . . . They'll git me—they allus git us. We've fit 'em time an' time, an' they git us in the end. Lord, I reckon we'uns is all fools. . . . (*Holding the bunch of arbutus at arm's length.*) . . . There, that's purty now.

(*Now the door opens slowly and a short, thick-set fellow steps into the room. The badge of an officer of the law can be seen under his coat. In his hand he holds a revolver. He is the* SHERIFF.)

THE SHERIFF

(*Smiling ironically*)

Welcome home, Buck.

(GAVIN *wheels swiftly, his hand moving to*

his hip pocket. He stops short on seeing the SHERIFF'S *gun.*)

GAVIN

Aw. . . . Hell. . . .

THE SHERIFF

(*Genially, highly pleased with himself*)

Quite a surprise, eh? Knew you'd be back, my boy, so I jes' laid low fer you. You never had a chance.

GAVIN

(*Slowly*)

Yeah, you got me I reckon, Sheriff, but I ain't worryin' 'bout it. Fact is, I'm glad you come—only . . . only I wish to God you'd been a leetle later.

THE SHERIFF

(*Surprised*)

Why?

GAVIN

(*Sullenly*)

Aw . . . nothin'. Come on, let's be travelin'. My sister'll be back any minute now, an' I don't want her to see the kind o' company I've took up with.

THE SHERIFF

(*In a high good humor*)

Jes' as you say, Buck, jes' as you say.

(*They start toward the door as* MARY *enters with a large bunch of violets. She sums up the situation at a glance.*

MARY

Oh, Buck, Buck, why did you come? I told you. An' now they've got you. I knowed it!

(*She sinks into a chair and buries her face in her hands.*)

GAVIN

(*He speaks gently and clumsily tries to sooth her*)

There, there, little sis, you mustn't carry on so. This is sartin' the best way out an' I'm not worr'in'—look at me. I'm glad, sis. What's in the game fer me now? My pal's gone an' there ain't no mo' fun in playin' it without him. . . . Tell the boys hello an' good-by fer me, an' tell 'em I says—But you needn't t' mind. . . . As fer you . . . (*Going to her.*) . . . you needn't to worry 'bout nothin' no mo'. I've fixed things up fer you.

MARY

Oh Buck, you needn't o' been caught. You could've got away.

GAVIN

(*With quiet emphasis*)

It is the law. You cain't buck it. (*There is a pause. The* SHERIFF *stands with bowed head, his jesting spirit gone. Then* GAVIN *speaks awkwardly*

as he prepares to leave.) Well, I reckon that's about all, so I'll be a-goin'. Be good to yourself, sis.

(*He notices the arbutus and the violets on the table and picks them up, muttering under his breath.*) I would've liked to 've took 'em up there, an' . . . an' . . . sort o' looked 'round. (*He looks at* MARY, *deeply moved.*) But . . . well, I reckon I cain't go now . . . but ol' Jim'll know . . . jes' the same. Sis,—you take 'em.

> (*He places the flowers in her lap.* MARY *does not raise her head. He pats her hair gently, clumsily, once or twice, then turns to go with the* SHERIFF. *At the door he turns and gives a last look around the room. His gaze rests finally on his sister. Then he goes out quietly.* MARY'S *head is pillowed in her arms. The flowers are in her lap.*

SLOW CURTAIN

GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR.[1]

A Comedy of Plantation Days

By

Lucy M. Cobb

[1] Copyright, 1923, by The Carolina Playmakers, Inc. All rights reserved. Permission to produce this play may be secured by addressing Frederick H. Koch, Director, The Carolina Playmakers, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 16th and 17th, 1923.

GAIUS MAYFIELD, *a plantation owner,*	George Denny
MRS. MAYFIELD, *his wife,*	Margaret Jones
GAIUS MAYFIELD, JR.	Theodore Livingstone
DR. FOSTER,	Robert Pickens
BEN, *a young slave,*	Tom Quickel
TOM, *an old slave,*	James Hawkins

SCENE: Demopolis, North Carolina. The plantation home of Mr. Gaius Mayfield.

TIME: The fall of 1859.

Scene 1. Saturday evening—about 8 o'clock.

Scene 2. Sunday morning—shortly before 5 o'clock.

Scene from *Gaius and Gaius, Jr.*, a comedy of plantation days, by Lucy M. Cobb. GAIUS MAYFIELD (George Denny); MRS. MAYFIELD (Margaret Jones); GAIUS, JR. (Theodore Livingstone); DOCTOR FOSTER (Robert Pickens).

GAIUS MAYFIELD: Careful, doctor, careful! Oh! . . . Oh! . . . I know I am dying! I'm going to explode!

Photograph by Wootton-Moulton

SCENE

THE scene is a spacious sitting room of plantation days. The windows are draped with lace curtains under cornices of gilt. In the rear wall is a door leading into the hall-way. A door in the left wall leads into GAIUS MAYFIELD, JR'S *bedroom. A mahogany sewing table, mahogany chairs upholstered in horsehair, a round table with marble top, and a what-not furnish the room. On the right is a fireplace with bookshelves on either side of it. On the mantelpiece is a row of medicine bottles, two medicine glasses, two spoons and a small glass pitcher half-full of water. Over the mantel is a steel engraving of the "Signing of the Declaration of Independence." In the center of the room on the marble-topped table stands a lamp hung with glass pendants.* MR. MAYFIELD'S *comfortable arm chair is at the right of this table before the fireplace.*

MR. *and* MRS. MAYFIELD *have settled down to a comfortable Saturday evening. He is sitting in his arm chair reading "The Atlanta Constitution."* MRS. MAYFIELD *is sitting in a small rocking chair at the left sewing.*

MR. MAYFIELD *is a portly gentleman of fifty-odd years, self-willed, hot-tempered and dictatorial. He is older than his wife, his hair and pointed beard*

already white. He is impeccably dressed in a well-tailored, black broadcloth suit of the period. MRS. MAYFIELD *is a charming, delicate lady—rather pretty in a faded way. She is dressed in a full-skirted lavender silk dress, worn over a hoop skirt. She wears a round, white, lace collar, pinned with a miniature of her husband. One can see by her manner that circumstances and her husband's overpowering will have made her subservient to him.*

GAIUS, JR.
(*Calling from his room*)

Mother!

MRS. MAYFIELD

Yes, son.

GAIUS, JR.

Did Mammy do up the shirt I told her to—that new-fashioned one I got from New York?

MRS. MAYFIELD

Yes, son, look in the lower bureau drawer and—

GAIUS
(*He speaks abruptly and peremptorily*)

Let the boy find his own things. Why is he dressing this time of night, anyway?

MRS. MAYFIELD

Emily Winn is giving a dance for her cousin Jessamine, and Gaius is invited.

GAIUS

Well, does the young fool have to go because he's invited? When I was young——

MRS. MAYFIELD

(*Interrupting him*)

Now father, you know when you were young you were the best dancer in the country.

GAIUS

(*Somewhat appeased*)

Well, I didn't dance when there was something better to do.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Well, Gaius has finished the book work you gave him.

GAIUS

Great Scott, Madam! What is a little book-keeping to a Carolina college man? In my day when men left the University they assumed grave responsibilities. I took charge of this plantation before I was twenty-one.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Gaius is only twenty.

GAIUS

Yes, and the young jackanapes must have his boots from London, his broadcloth clothes made by a New

York tailor—made from the same piece as his father's!

MRS. MAYFIELD
(*Soothing him*)

But, Father, you must see him in them when he is dressed! You'll be proud of your son. None of the young beaux at the party will match him.

GAIUS

Humph! He'd better not come back and tell me he's been attentive to that Foster girl. I'll——

MRS. MAYFIELD

Mr. Mayfield, don't threaten. You know what happens when you get excited.

GAIUS

Madam, I'm *not* excited! I tell you my heart is all right. An ignoramus like that Foster doesn't know what he is talking about. But to be on the safe side, I will take a few of my drops. (*Going to the mantelpiece, he pours out the medicine into a spoon, then into a glass, mixing it with water, and takes his dose.*) This section has reached a most deplorable condition, a most deplorable one, when a know-nothing doctor like Foster can practice here, and his daughter be received in polite society. Tells me nothing is the matter, when I know I've nearly died several times! Only urges no excitement. Bah! Gentlemen's sons ought to study the art of medicine.

Who wants a rank plebeian admitted into his family circle?

MRS. MAYFIELD

I'm sure——

GAIUS

(*Impatiently*)

Sure—excuse me, Madam, you women are always sure about things of which you know absolutely nothing.

(LIZ, *a young negro maid dressed in black, with white kerchief and red and yellow head-rag, appears at the hall door and drops a curtsey.*)

LIZ

Massa . . .

MRS. MAYFIELD

What is it, Liz?

GAIUS

What do you want, girl?

LIZ

(*She trembles as she speaks*)

Please ma'am, please sir, Ben wants to know kin he speak to you?

GAIUS

Tell him to come in.

(LIZ *drops another curtsey and goes out.* BEN *comes in. He is a half-grown negro boy, dressed in plaid blue and red shirt, and nondescript trousers. He holds a ragged cap in his hand and stands first on one foot, then on the other, rolling his eyes, afraid to speak.*)

BEN

Please . . . sir . . . de conjure woman says ez how if we all don' stop wuckin' on Sunday, the "Old Boy" gwine ter get us sure! Me an' Sam . . . we's 'pinted to axe you 'bout quittin' it, sir.

GAIUS

Oh, confound you and Sam and your conjure woman! You young niggers are just too infernally lazy to lift one leg above the other. This is an emergency, I tell you, an emergency! You know you never do work on Sunday. But you'll work *this* time. . . . You do nothing the other six days of the week.

BEN

But, Massa, de black cats am a-scratchin' at de yearth, and de squinch owls am a-squinchin', and ever' time us niggers crosses de road from de South field, a rabbit runs across our paf.

GAIUS

(*Charging on* BEN)

Oh, damn you black Africans and your supersti-

tions; it'll take more than black cats and owls and rabbits to make me let you stop work, you lazy nigger. Get out o' here, and don't you come back here with your conjure tales! . . . Get out, I say!

(BEN *slinks out more frightened than ever.*)

GAIUS

(*Sitting again with some difficulty in the big chair, and gasping for breath*)

Maria, give me my medicine—quick. These black rascals will be the death of me yet. (*Sputtering.*) If I die . . .

MRS. MAYFIELD

(*Soothing him*)

Oh, father, don't talk of dying.

(*Going to the mantel, she takes up a small bottle, drops a few drops of medicine into a glass, pours in water and takes the glass to her husband. He gulps down the contents of the glass.*)

GAIUS

(*Still gasping, but somewhat relieved*)

Zounds, Maria, maybe these darkies are right. . . . I'll reconsider this Sunday business. I'd hate to die (*gasping*) and . . .

MRS. MAYFIELD

(*Patting him on the shoulder*)

There, there, father! I'm glad for you to do the

right thing. You remember you were sorry and sick after that road affair.

GAIUS

(*Getting up*)

I'm better now. (*Stretching himself.*) I'm all right. I'll be——I'll be——Oh, confound it!—Excuse me, Maria,—but I'll be *consarned* if I do remember.——No! these lazy niggers shall work when I say so. Did they have any Sunday in Africa, Madam? Tell me that?

(MRS. MAYFIELD *is about to retort, but closes her lips firmly and goes on with her sewing.*

GAIUS, JR.

(*Entering. He is dressed in a new black broadcloth suit made in the same style as his father's. He is a youth of twenty, tall as his father, but slender. He is faultlessly dressed, and is evidently proud of himself.*)

Mother, does your son's appearance suit you?

(GAIUS MAYFIELD *puts down his paper and glares at his son over his spectacles.*)

MRS. MAYFIELD

(*Surveying him approvingly*)

Yes, son, you look——

GAIUS

(*Sputtering out*)

'Tis not his appearance I'm interested in, but his

deportment. I hope sir, you'll have the grace to remember the honor of your forebears, and pay no attention to that upstart, Betty Foster.

MRS. MAYFIELD AND GAIUS, JR.

Father!

GAIUS, JR.

Don't call her an upstart, Father. She is a charming girl!

GAIUS

Charming, fiddlesticks! From such ancestry! Humph! Your judgment is worth just that of any other foolish young puppy.

GAIUS, JR.

Her father is a reputable physician, who attends you when you're sick.

GAIUS

Only because I can get no *gentleman* in this God-forsaken country. He doesn't even know enough to tell when I'm desperately ill!

(*He resumes his reading.*)

GAIUS, JR.

Mother am I dressed correctly?

MRS. MAYFIELD

Just as you should be, son. (*She surveys him*

proudly, smiles approvingly, flicking a bit of imaginary dust from his coat.) Son, you look so well, I wonder if this wouldn't be a good time to tell your father about the trouble with Simeon Hatcher.

GAIUS, JR.
(*In despair*)

Is there *ever* a good time to tell him troubles—unless he thinks he's dying, and so is repentant?

MRS. MAYFIELD

Be careful what you say, son. He's had to have his medicine twice in the last half-hour.

GAIUS, JR.

Dr. Foster says we needn't fear for his heart. He's hot-headed. That's his only real trouble!

MRS. MAYFIELD

Hush! He may hear you.—Now, son, please do as mother asks.

GAIUS, JR.

Father. (GAIUS MAYFIELD *puts down his paper, surveying him.*) Can't we let up on this Sunday work? Sim Hatcher says Uncle Enoch and all the older darkies are giving him trouble about working that south field on Sunday.

GAIUS

It is only in an emergency like this after a spell of

dry weather when the ground gets right do I make them work. If they get too uppety I told Sim to use the lash.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Poor old Enoch!

GAIUS

Don't get sentimental, Madam. You know our darkies are seldom whipped. We are too good to them, that is the trouble.

GAIUS, JR.

But, Father, whipping does them no good. They say the devil will get them if they work on Sunday.

GAIUS

African superstition! Gad, they are mine and I'll do as I damn please with them.—Excuse me, Maria! —As I *please*. A young buck of a nigger came to me just now, and here you're pleading for the old ones.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Father, I said no good would come from this work on the Lord's Day.

GAIUS, JR.

Both old Annie, and the conjure woman say "the portents are a-p'inting at trouble" and have been since

that first Sunday the niggers worked. And all the darkies stand by old Annie.

GAIUS

(*Blustering out*)

Am I afraid of such confounded superstitions? One day is as good as another if the weather is right for hoeing.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Father, I don't like to remind you——

GAIUS

Then don't do it, Madam.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Father, I must. You remember, when you thought you were going to die last fall, how sorry you were for the Jefferson affair!

GAIUS

Gad, Madam, the new road is shorter than the old one.

MRS. MAYFIELD

To think a Mayfield would disturb public worship with the creaking of his wagons, and the cursing of his darkies! I hate to feel the unspoken reproach of our neighbors and friends.

GAIUS

Humph! I haven't found much of it unspoken.

If they didn't like the sounds of honest toil, they needn't have put their church-house by the road.

GAIUS, JR.

Father, I am humiliated that they had to write in their records of incorporation, that they incorporated their town to keep your wagons out on Sunday; but this Sunday field work is even worse than that.

GAIUS

(*Starting up*)

And since when has a son had the right to insult his father by talking of humiliation? Gad, young man, you'd better clear out to your infernal party or I'll make you clear out! (*Rising.*) Where is my cane? (*He stalks angrily around the room.*) You rely on the mildness of my temper to excuse you for your insolence!

MRS. MAYFIELD

Son, say something to him.

GAIUS, JR.

Father, I didn't intend to make you angry.

GAIUS

You didn't, eh? Well, get out of here!—Now, mind you, you're to be back at 12 o'clock. Honest working folks like me get up at 5 o'clock. I don't

want any young whipper-snapper disturbing my rest.

GAIUS, JR.

I'll go up the back stairs.

GAIUS

Gad, sir, do as I tell you!

MRS. MAYFIELD

Yes, son; I'll leave a fire for you.

GAIUS, JR.

Thank you, Mother. Good-by. (*He goes over to his mother and kisses her.*) Good-by, Father.

GAIUS

(*Growling*)

Good-by.

(*He resumes his reading*)

MRS. MAYFIELD

Good-by, son, have a good time. (GAIUS, JR. *goes out.*) And, son, be sure to hang your new suit in the hall wardrobe when you come in.

GAIUS, JR.

All right, Mother, I will.

MRS. MAYFIELD

(*Beseeching*)

Father, you'll do as Gaius asked, won't you?

GAIUS

Mrs. Mayfield, I've given my orders, I'll be obeyed.

MRS. MAYFIELD

You gave your orders about the hauling, but when the Lord sent that sickness upon you, you grew sorry. You promised then to stop breaking the Sabbath.

GAIUS

Who says I'm sick now? Because I played the fool and weakened once, do you think I'll continue to do so? No, Madam, your husband is no old fool. An occasional emergency must be met with common sense.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Poor old darkies, they're too feeble to work seven days in the week.

GAIUS

Feeble! Humph! It's just that foolish conjure woman's talk. Those old darkies can put in a better day's work now than many of their grandchildren. I tell you, Mrs. Mayfield, no time can be wasted on this plantation when you encourage your son to dress in the style of his father. Time was when such extravagance was not permitted. Black broadcloth —made in New York—just like his father's! Bah! . . . I must say the young scamp looked well when he

left just now. You, Madam, are bad enough, but I shall not tell him how handsome he has become.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Yes, hasn't he? Why, my dear, just the other day, Mrs. Tallichet said to me, "How strikingly like his father young Gaius is growing." (GAIUS *strokes his chin and smiles his agreement.*) He is, too.

GAIUS

Um-m . . . Mrs. Tallichet is a very observant woman.

MRS. MAYFIELD

She saw Gaius and Betty Foster together and said, "What a handsome couple!"

GAIUS

Madam, please do not couple the name of my son with that of old Foster.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Father, after that last spell when you thought you were dying, you said you'd not interfere if Gaius really loved Betty.

GAIUS

There you go again reminding me of illnesses. Don't I suffer enough without that? Madam, it may be, "No fool like an old fool," but I say, "No fool

like a sick man." I'll keep no promises extorted from me on my dying bed.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Extorted, my dear? You freely offered to accept the girl.

GAIUS

Well, I will not. No Mayfield has yet married a descendant of old Abe Foster, and, while there's breath in my body, none shall.

MRS. MAYFIELD

You've grown to depend on Dr. Foster to keep it there.

GAIUS

(*Rising and starting to the door*)

Madam! I shall go to bed.—With a son going against his father's wishes and his mother abetting him in his disobedience, it's no wonder that I often come near death's door. It's no wonder that I—— Good night, Mrs. Mayfield.

(*He goes out.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE II

IT is 5 o'clock on the following morning. The room is almost dark. GAIUS MAYFIELD *is heard groaning off stage.* MRS. MAYFIELD *enters from the hall with a lighted candle and lights the table lamp. She is in negligee.* GAIUS *staggers into the room and drops into his chair. He is dressed in black broadcloth as before, but his white shirt front bulges out and his waistcoat and trousers will not meet. He is collarless.*

GAIUS

(*With great perturbation. His manner is now humble and sanctimonious in strange contrast with his former defiance*)

Oh, oh! My dear—(*Groaning.*) Call Gaius! Tell him to ride at once to Dr. Foster. I am desperately ill!

MRS. MAYFIELD

(*Leaving him, she goes to the door and calls*)

Gaius, Gaius!

GAIUS, JR.

Yes, Mother.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Your father is sick. Dress quickly and ride for Dr. Foster.

GAIUS, JR.

All right, Mother, I will.

GAIUS

Come to me, my dear one. Take my hand. I may not be here when the doctor comes. (*With pathetic appeal.*) Look at my body. See how I am swelling! (*Touching his body.*)

MRS. MAYFIELD

My dear, be calm. It does not seem swollen.

GAIUS

But it *is,* Maria. (*Excited.*) Don't you see . my clothes will not meet? Maria, hold my hand. This may be the last time you will look on your poor, patient, suffering husband.

MRS. MAYFIELD

No, my dear. No.—Where does it hurt? Can I give you some drops? (*She lets go her husband's hand, and starts toward the mantelpiece.*) There are none for the swelling.

GAIUS

(*In despair*)

Oh! Don't let me die! Suppose you mix *all* the bottles.

(*She pours out medicine from each of the three bottles into a glass of water and gives it to her husband.*)

MRS. MAYFIELD

Here it is. (*He drinks.*) Now don't you feel better?

GAIUS

Better, my love? I cannot be better till the good doctor comes. (*In despair.*) Oh! I shall die before he gets here . . . (*Humbly.*) The *good* doctor!

MRS. MAYFIELD

Is there any pain?

GAIUS

Of course there is pain, for I am getting bigger! (*He feels about on his body with both hands.*) God a'mighty, where *is* the pain? . . . I must be in pain for I'm dying . . . of . . . dropsy!

MRS. MAYFIELD

No, no, there! (*Soothing him.*) Your temperature is all right. You have no fever. You can't be very sick.

GAIUS

(*His voice rising*)

But I *am* very sick! I must be dying! Madam, will you let your husband *die?*

MRS. MAYFIELD

Calm yourself, Mr. Mayfield. The doctor will soon be here.

GAIUS

(*Vehemently*)

Calm! Calm! How can I be *calm* when I am swelling up . . . like a balloon! Careful, Maria, careful—Oh, Lord! . . . I shall die! I cannot stand this! Oh, my God! *Don't* let me die. I'll let my niggers rest on Sunday, hard times or no hard times. Don't let me die, Lord! Call old Tom, Maria.

MRS. MAYFIELD

The doctor will soon be here. Don't be excited. (*She goes to hall door and calls.*) Tom! Tom!—There now. . . . Calm yourself, my dear!

GAIUS

Calm myself . . . in the face of death! This is no time for calmness; I must talk to the Lord.—Oh, Lord, I'll let the niggers never work on Sunday, and do any other thing you want if you'll just stand by me now! Don't let me . . . burst before the doctor comes!

(*He writhes in his chair, feeling parts of his body as before.* UNCLE TOM, BEN *and* LIZ *have come in. They stand in respectful attitudes.* LIZ *drops a curtsey and speaks.*)

LIZ

What kin I do, Missus?

MRS. MAYFIELD

Put on a kettle of water. Have Tom fix the fire. Get some cloths from the press in the other room.

LIZ

(*She curtsies, and goes*)

Yes, Missus.

GAIUS

(*Sitting up straight in his chair*)

Tom, Tom, come here!

TOM

Yes, sir, Massa, here I is.

GAIUS

Tom, you old niggers needn't work any more on Sunday.

TOM

Thank y', Massa, thank y', suh.

GAIUS

Ben!

BEN

Yes, suh, Massa.

GAIUS

Ben, what's that in your hand?

BEN

Jes' er rabbit foot, Massa. Nothin' but a rabbit foot.

GAIUS

Ben, you needn't be afraid of that black ape of a conjure woman . . . you nor the rest of you young niggers. There'll be no more Sunday work!

BEN

Thank y', suh, thank y'.

GAIUS

Oh, Lord, I'm damned, I'm damned. What else do you want? Maria, am I going down any?

MRS. MAYFIELD

You certainly are not swelling any more.

GAIUS

Oh, Lord, let me go down . . . just a little.—That would be a vile end for a gentleman like me! To burst!!

MRS. MAYFIELD

(LIZ *brings cloths and a kettle of hot water*)
Let me put some hot cloths on you.

GAIUS

(*Pushing her away*)
No, no, if I get hot, I might burst like a . . . *baked*

apple! Take those damnable cloths away! Take them away! Do you want your husband to *explode?* —Oh, Lord, send the doctor.

LIZ

Heah he come now, Missus.

(DR. FOSTER *enters with young* GAIUS. *He is about forty-five, fair and fat, with a shrewd twinkle in his eye. He looks as if he can't believes the situation is serious.*)

DR. FOSTER

How do you do, Mrs. Mayfield. (*Putting down his bag, he goes over to* GAIUS *and feels his pulse.*) Good morning, Mr. Mayfield. . . . Your tongue. (GAIUS *puts out his tongue.*) Umm. . . .

(*He thumps the patient's body on both sides, listens above his heart, thumps him on his stomach.*)

GAIUS

Oh! oh! . . . Careful, doctor, careful!

DR. FOSTER
(*To* MRS. MAYFIELD)

What time was he taken?

MRS. MAYFIELD

He got up at five. When he couldn't make his clothes meet, he called me—about 5:10, I suppose.

GAIUS

Five! Zounds! It was two!

DR. FOSTER

Um—um—about three quarters of an hour ago. What have you done for him?

GAIUS

(*Interrupting*)

Done, doctor, done? Not a damned thing!—Oh, Lord, forgive me!—Do something, doctor, quick!

MRS. MAYFIELD

I've given him his drops.

DR. FOSTER

How many times?

MRS. MAYFIELD

At least three times. I mixed them all together once.

GAIUS

I know I am dying! I am going to explode!

DR. FOSTER

Mr. Mayfield, are your affairs in order?

GAIUS

My affairs? Good God, man!

(*He realizes he must be very sick, now that it is confirmed by the doctor.*)

DR. FOSTER

(*Winking at* MRS. MAYFIELD)

Have you no messages to leave? No sins to repent of?

GAIUS

(*In desperation. Now quite penitent*)

Oh, Lord, let me live to do it. Don't let me die till the niggers rest next Sunday.—Wife, wife, send the Jefferson church that organ money. (*Groaning.*) Oh, Lord, Lord!—Where is Gaius?

GAIUS, JR.

Here I am, Father.

GAIUS

Gaius, do you really love that girl?

GAIUS, JR.

I swear I do!

GAIUS

Then, boy, marry her . . . with my blessing.

DR. FOSTER

Mr. Mayfield, try to be calm. Such moments of reparation seldom come. Do you wish to put in writing what you have just said?

GAIUS

In writing! Yes, in any d—— in any thing.

Can this poor dropsied hand write?—For God's sake, doctor, you write it. I'll sign whatever you write.

DR. FOSTER

Mrs. Mayfield, take care of him while I write.

(*He winks at* GAIUS JR. *and* MRS. MAYFIELD, *goes to table, and writes.* MRS. MAYFIELD *stands behind her husband and smooths back his hair.*)

GAIUS

Careful, careful, Maria.—Is the skin on my forehead stretched?

MRS. MAYFIELD

It seems to be about as usual, dear.

GAIUS

Oh, what a good wife you have been—with never a cross word between us. Oh, Lord, let me show her I love her before I—Dear Maria, you know I love you.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Yes, Father, I——

DR. FOSTER

(*Interrupting*)

This paper promises the Lord and man that if he is allowed to live, he'll treat his niggers kindly, and give them no Sunday work. The Jefferson church shall

have the promised money, and Gaius Jr. shall marry whom he pleases. Is that all right? . . . Now sign here, Mr. Mayfield.

GAIUS

Oh, Lord yes, I promise you all this and anything else you want. (Dr. Foster *hands him the paper which he signs. Then with a supreme effort he continues.*) Gaius, put on your broadcloth coat, and send for the girl and the preacher. I'll see you married before I pass away.

GAIUS, JR.
(*Cheerfully*)

Father, you are good for many a day, yet.

GAIUS

No, my hour has come. Put on your broadcloth and fetch Betty. . . .

DR. FOSTER

Your father is in no immediate danger. Do as he tells you if it pleases him.

GAIUS

Go, son, go quick!

GAIUS, JR.
(*As he goes into the hall*)

Very well, Father.

GAIUS

He's a fine son, doctor . . . a *fine* son . . .

GAIUS, JR.

(*Calling from the hall*)

Mother, Mother! Where are my new broadcloth clothes—the one like father's?

MRS. MAYFIELD

In the wardrobe where you put them when you came from the party last night, I suppose.

GAIUS, JR.

(*Enters, carrying his father's broadcloth suit*)

No, they aren't. Here are *Father's,* with his watch in his pocket. But where are mine?

(GAIUS, *at the word "watch," feels in his pocket.*)

DR. FOSTER

(*Chuckling*)

Where did you get your new suit, Mr. Mayfield?

GAIUS

My new suit? I have no new suit.

DR. FOSTER

(*Laughing heartily*)

What do you have on, then?

GAIUS

(*He picks up one of his coat tails and feels in his pocket*)

Well, I'll be—is this Gaius's coat? Is this *his* waistcoat? God a'mighty! Then I'm *not* dying? I shall not burst?

DR. FOSTER

Not a bit of it. You're a perfectly well man.

GAIUS

But all that medicine I took? Won't it kill me?

DR. FOSTER

Colored water, mostly. If it'd kill you, you'd been dead long ago.

MRS. MAYFIELD

Oh, my dear! You're really not sick!

(*She kisses his forehead. He pats her hand*)

GAIUS

Well, well . . . I . . . I . . .

GAIUS, JR.

Then, Father, your promise doesn't hold?

GAIUS

Hell, it doesn't!—O Lord, forgive me!—Who said it doesn't? I think I've learned my lesson. (*He holds out his hand to* DR. FOSTER.) Your hand, doctor. Tell your little girl I beg her to be my daughter.

CURTAIN

FIXIN'S [1]

The Tragedy of a Tenant-Farm Woman

By

Erma and Paul Greene

[1] Copyright, 1924, by The Carolina Playmakers, Inc. All rights reserved. Permission to produce this play may be secured by addressing Frederick H. Koch, Director, The Carolina Playmakers, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 8th and 9th, 1924.

ED ROBINSON, *a young tenant farmer,*	Charles Pritchett
LILLY ROBINSON, *his wife,*	Frances Gray
JIM COOPER, *his landlord,*	Aubrey Shackell

SCENE: The kitchen of the Robinson farmhouse in Eastern North Carolina.

TIME: The present. An Autumn evening, about half-past six o'clock.

Frances Gray as LILLY ROBINSON in *Fixin's* the tragedy of a tenant-farm woman, by Erma and Paul Greene. (Miss Gray is author of *The Beaded Buckle.*)

LILLY stands, undecided, in the doorway.

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

SCENE

THE kitchen of the Robinson home, the bare cold room of a tenant farmer. In the rear wall is a door leading to the outside, a small window to the right of it. A door on the left leads into the only other room of the house, both a bedroom and sitting room. At the right is a cooking stove, and in the center of the room is an eating-table made of rough timbers and covered with a checkered oil-cloth. Between the table and the wall is an old-fashioned bench. There is a chair near the table and another near the stove.

The scene opens with ED ROBINSON *preparing supper at the stove. He is a stockily-built man of twenty-five or thirty, with a plain, honest face, but a face that shows strength and will and maybe a violent passion when aroused. His movements with the supper are awkward and detached, showing that he is unused to the job of cooking and, too, that he is thinking of something besides his present task. He is dressed in overalls, a rough jacket, and heavy shoes. As he is cutting the meat, steps are heard on the porch. He stops and listens. The door is pushed slowly open, and* JIM COOPER, *a broad-shouldered pushing, genial man, past middle-age, comes in. He is blunt and outspoken.*

COOPER

Heigho, Ed, havin' it all by yerself, uh?

ED

(*Turning from the stove*)

Why, how you, Mr. Cooper? Come in and have a che'r.

(*He pushes a chair towards* COOPER *who sits at the left of the table.*)

COOPER

(*Looking around the room*)

Thanks. Sort o' lonesome here by yerself, you know, ain't it, Ed? (*Hurriedly.*) Course some folks likes it that-a-way . . . but . . .

ED

Yeh, 'tain't no picnic mebbe. . . .

(*He lapses into gloomy silence, stares at his knife-handle a moment, then begins putting the meat quickly into the pan, stirring around as if anxious to forget something that is worrying the life out of him.*)

COOPER

Well, I thought I'd come over and have a settlement about the cotton before you got off some'r's or went to sleep. (*Watching him closely.*) But you ain't no night-hawk fer traveling, are you?—Not lately anyhow.

ED

Nope, I stick clost about.

(*He taps on the pan with the knife-blade.*)

COOPER

You shore do, and that's the God's truth. But just because she's gone off making a fool of herself, you needn't. (ED *straightens up and stands listening, threatening.*) Never mind—'scuse me, Ed—you know I will talk. My daddy was a great hand fer it. . . . (*Pulling out a pencil and paper and leaning over on the table.*) Cotton was bringing thirty cents to-day—got thirty fer Lilly's bale.

ED

(*With a show of interest*)

Quair it run up so—boll weevil, I reckon, 's e't it all up from Texas to I don't know where.

COOPER

That's it, I 'spect. Fine on us though, fer it ain't hurt us none as yet. (*He lays down his pencil and pulls a roll of money from his pocket.* ED *sits on the opposite side of the table.*) Your bale weighed 505 pounds, the seed $20, all told $171.50. Your half comes to $85.75. (*He counts out the money and lays it on the table.*) There it is, Ed, a right smart pile. If you turn this money over to her, I reckon she'll cut a splu'ge.

ED

Thank y', Mr. Jim. I'll put it away soon's I finish my cooking. How much I owe you fer the hauling?

COOPER

Nothing, nothing. Glad to do it fer you; we'll strike off even fer that day you holp me pull stumps.

(*He gets up, as if to leave.*)

ED

All right, sir. Suits me, if it does you.

COOPER

(*Making as if to go, but plainly in no hurry*)

You got . . . got any certain thing you want to sink this money in, Ed?

ED

Not exactly. . . . I had been thinkin'—least-ways Lilly's been thinkin'—you see 'tain't my money, it's hers.

COOPER

I know what's she's been thinking. (*He sits back down decisively.*) Look-a-here, Ed, seems like a good time fer you an' me to talk business.

ED

(*Uncertainly*)

Yes, sir. . . .

COOPER

I'm plumb good an' ready to sell you that land. The $400 you lent me is due about now. Course, I can pay it back. (*Edging his chair nearer.*) But I got a note over in Lillington to pay off next Sat'd'y for $500. Tell you what I'll do. Pay me $80 down now and I'll credit you with a plain five-hundred on the land.

ED

(*Hurrying to turn his meat*)

I dunno just exactly. . . . That's Lilly's money. . . .

COOPER

Lilly's nothing. You use' ter talk right sharp about that trade, and last spring fer a while—But you ain't 'peared to take much stock in it lately.

ED

(*Fingering the money*)

Well, this here's the first time cotton's been bringing anything since Lilly an' me got married. And I'd sorter been thinkin' . . .

COOPER

(*Filling up a clay pipe and lighting it*)

Thinking what?

ED

Oh, nothin', mebbe. I had sorter begun to git out'n the notion of the land business.

COOPER

(*Dropping the burning match with a smothered exclamation of pain*)

Who put you out'n the notion, Ed?

ED

(*Sitting down again*)

Nobody . . . that is . . . well, I just got out'n the notion, that's all.

COOPER

I know who done it. Ed, I remember, same as yesterday, the day you and Lilly drove off to git married. What had you been talking about before that,—buying you a place of yer own, that's what. You talked the same way the year after—even went so far early this fall as to lend me the four-hundred with the land matter in mind. And now you're all changed. What's the matter?

ED

Land costs a whole sight more'n it use' ter.

COOPER

Yes, but cotton's bringin' a terrible high price and going higher. You know, Ed, I want you to have that 25 acres. Drat it, I can git rid of it to-morrow fer cash money, but—well, you've been good to wait on us all—sickness, cold, hot or whatsoever—and Mary says herself that if that piece o' ground is ever sold, she wants it sold to you two.

ED

That's shore good of her—of you too. She's tuk a sight with my Lilly.

COOPER

Well—business is business and feelin's is feelin's —but if you want that place you can——

ED

Mr. Jim, Lilly . . . she ain't——

COOPER

(*Stamping the floor*)

Of course it's Lilly behind it all—knowed it from the fu'st—everybody knows it! (ED *looks at the floor, then goes to his cooking. His complete silence makes* COOPER *uneasy and he speaks in a more placating tone.*) What does Lilly say, Ed?

ED

Mr. Jim, you remember that time at Tom Atkins's saw mill when I forgot myself and nearly come to—to—scrushing in his head——

COOPER

Lord, Ed, I didn't mean to rile you.

ED

(*Quietly*)

That's all right, I hadn't ought to git mad either. And they ain't no harm in my telling you that Lilly

ain't tuck with farming no more. In place of land, she wants to buy fixin's and sich, and purty up the house.

COOPER

Wants to buy furniture, and graffyfoans, and lace curtains, and the like, uh?

ED

Somethin' like that, I reckon, if you say so.

COOPER

And all that there talk o' hern's caused you to change yer mind?

ED

The main reason, I 'spect, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER

Well, Ed, I'm goin' ter talk to you plain, man to man, and I don't want you to git stirred up nuther.

ED

What's . . . what you want to tell me?

COOPER

Well—Lilly ain't treating you right, and that's the p'int-blank truth.

ED

(*Going to him*)

What you mean?

COOPER

Now don't git on a high horse. I'm goin' ter say out my say.

ED

(*Stubbornly*)

All right, sir.

COOPER

Lilly wants to move to town, don't she?

ED

Well, she's plumb wore out with choppin' cotton and pickin' till her fingers drip blood. (*Bursting out.*) And who can blame her?

COOPER

I can, fer one. Women ain't made jest to be dolls and kept in a show-case, and Lilly Robinson ain't never hurt herself at work, now has she?

ED

I said I'd let you tell what you wanted to.

COOPER

And I will too. She's been over in Dunn now for nigh three weeks, ain't she?

ED

(*Controlling himself*)

She was needin' a change. It's been hard . . . hard on her since . . . since little Charlie died.

COOPER
(*Kindly*)

Yes, yes. (*Sternly.*) But not as big a change as she's gittin' from what I hear.

ED

Do, how?

COOPER

Oh, I know you've promised to give her that money to buy flim-flams fer herself.—Yes, you have.—And what's she doing? . . . Lloyd Mangum told me today that she's over there in Dunn riding around with a traveling man, some sort o' agent, one of these guys, I reckon, that squirts cologne on hisself and wears two or three rings at a time.

ED

Lloyd Mangum is a damn liar, and I'll wring his damn neck.

COOPER

What 'n the thunder you want to git het up so sudden fer? I ain't talkin' up fer Lloyd, or fer you, or anybody. But he's never been known to have a loose tongue, now has he?

ED
(*Muttering to himself*)

God a'mighty, she cain't be doing that!
(*He bows his head, staring at the floor.*)

COOPER

It's fer your own good I'm telling you this. You know well enough Lilly ought to be here helping you git out your cotton—right in the busiest time o' the year too—and she gallivantin' 'round! And Lloyd Mangum ain't the only one that's been talkin' and seein' the truth, with you as blind as a bat. Mary got a letter to-day from Marthy Sikes over in Dunn, and she spoke about Lilly's ridin' around and goin' to movin' pictur' shows with that feller. It's true, Ed, true as gospel that she ain't a-doing you right.

ED

(*Starting up*)

I'm going to Dunn to-night!

COOPER

Your meat's burning up, Ed. (*Going to the stove.*) And you ain't going to no Dunn to-night.

ED

(*Sitting down, rolling the dish-cloth in his hands*)

It's a passel o' lies somebody's startin'. It shore God is!

COOPER

Lies or no lies, that's not the question. It's this. Ed—Are you goin' ter let her with her honey-sugar ways keep you from being a man? She studies herself.—Oh, yes she does, and you needn't deny it.—If

I was you I'd put on the britches and wear 'em awhile. (*He walks angrily about the table.*) Good Lord! do you reckon I'd let a bright-haired looking glass hugger run over me like that? And, Ed Robinson, if you've got any guts in you, you'll not.

(*He takes up the burning meat and sets it off the stove.*)

ED

Oh, I hear what you say about my wife, Mr. Jim Cooper. And I don't want to hear any more of it.

COOPER

(*Shouting*)

Don't want to hear any more of it? Well, you will all right!

ED

(*Standing up, holding the knife in his hand*)

That I won't. Stop talking about my wife like that.

(*He dashes the knife on the table, and stands closing and unclosing his enormous hands.*)

COOPER

(*Laughing bitterly*)

Stop talking? You order me to stop talking. Well, my boy, if I wanted to I could tell you a streak, before I finish. Why in this world you want to go around with your eyes shut and seein' nothin', never suspicionin' what everybody has talked over and over a thousand times, I can't see!

ED

(*Slumping down in his chair, and sitting with bowed head*)

All right, say what you think then.

COOPER

(*Coming out of his flood of anger, and speaking more kindly*)

I ain't doing you right, I reckon, Ed. But I couldn't wait no longer. I just had to say what I felt fer onct. (*They are both silent a moment. Then* COOPER *goes towards the door.*) I got to be goin' now. Mebbe I done wrong talkin' to you so, and beggin' you to buy that piece of ground. (*Turning back.*) But, Ed, think of the *bargain* I'm offerin' you. Why this evening at the gin, Joe Langdon offered me $3000 fer that piece. And . . . I tell you what I'll do—I'll let you have it fer $2500, and five years to pay fer it. Count what you lent me and the eighty, as five hundred. (ED *sits hunched over.*) Shore 'nough, Ed, don't take on so about that little piece o' news.

ED

It ain't no little piece o' news. (*Throwing his hands out before him helplessly.*) Why, Mr. Jim, she's so . . . so . . . well, it's all lies, that's what.

COOPER

Well, poke up yer chin, and don't git down—don't you now. Everything will come out fer the best. It

always does. (COOPER *stands with his hands on the door-knob. They are both silent.*) Well? . . .

ED

(*Turning, and pushing the money across the table*)
Here it is, Mr. Jim.

COOPER

(*Coming again back into the room. He sits down at the table and picks up the money. Then he takes out his pencil and writes on a piece of paper*)

Here's a receipt for the full five-hundred, Ed. Come over in the morning and we'll fix up all the papers.

(ED *mechanically takes the receipt from him.*)

ED

Much obliged to you.

COOPER

(*Blustering*)

Keep your thanks, boy. I'm more tickled over it than you seem to be. I feel like a man who has done a bit of missionary work, or something. Say, come on and walk home with me now and take supper at our house. Mary'll be plumb glad to have you in. Reckon she thinks old Bloody-bones's got me, or something. Come on.

ED

I cain't. I'll git my supper here . . . don't mind.

(COOPER *turns around awkwardly, then moves to the door.*)

COOPER

Well, good-by. Take care o' yerself.

ED

Thank y'. . . . You do the same.

(COOPER *goes out.* ED *sits staring before him. The receipt drops unnoticed to the floor. He gets up, looks ruefully at the burnt meat, and punches up the fire in the stove. He leans back against the table, his hands shoved deep into his pockets, and begins whistling "Oh, Sally dear. . . ." He sees the receipt on the floor, picks it up, crams it into his pocket, sits back heavily against the table, knocking over a vase of dried flowers. After looking intently at the vase for a moment, he takes it up and, without any show of emotion, hurls it into the corner, smashing it into bits. He punches the fire up once more, and stands warming his hands. He hesitates a moment, then suddenly hurries into the room at the left. Almost immediately he returns carrying a suit of clothes on a coat-rack and a pair of shoes. He drops them on the table, takes off his overall jacket and begins to take off his shoes. Light footsteps are heard coming up the*

porch. He stops, an incredulous look on his face which gives way to one of joy and anger. He watches the door in a sort of stupefaction. There is a fluttering of knuckle knocks on the door, and a voice calls, "Ed!". But ED *makes no response. The door opens, and* LILLY ROBINSON *comes in, carrying a cheap suitcase in her hand. She is a tall young woman of twenty-three or twenty-four years, dressed in plain, becoming clothes—white waist, dark skirt and lacy collar. She has a fresh sweet face and youthful manner; yet behind her apparent gayety and childlikeness there hides a strong will and a hint of recklessness, now hidden in weariness.*

As she enters, ED *begins lacing up his shoes and putting his overall-jacket on again. He does not look at her after the first glance of recognition.* LILLY *stands, undecided, in the doorway, waits an instant, then moves into the room, closing the door behind her.*

LILLY

Ed, I was sorter expecting you to meet me. (ED *makes no reply, but picks up his clothes and carries them back to the room at the left.* LILLY *watches him uncertainly.*) Was you going somewheres, Ed?

ED

(*Reappearing*)

No, not now.

LILLY

(*Dropping her suitcase on the floor and standing, undecided*)

Ed. . . . I didn't mean to stay an extry week . . . but I wrote you why I wanted to. You got my letter; didn't you?

ED

(*Glumly*)

No, I hain't heard a word from you. (*Picking up the dishcloth and moving to the stove.*) But I've heerd *about* you.

LILLY

What, what have you heard?

ED

(*Dully*)

Have off yer things, and make yerself at home.

LILLY

(*Mechanically pulling off her coat and hat and laying them on the table*)

What'n the world ails you, Ed? You ain't mad about something, are you?

ED

I reckon I'm not.

LILLY

I wrote to you, Ed, and told you to meet me in

Angier this evenin'. If it hadn't been for Mr. Jake Turlington coming this way, I don't know how I'd 'a' got home.

ED

(*After a pause*)

I ain't had no letter from you.

LILLY

I give it to Mr. . . . Mr. . . . Ryalls to mail for me. (*Thinking.*) No, I declare, I plumb forgot to mail it. It's lying on the bureau at Aunt Margaret's.

ED

(*A hard note slipping into his voice*)

Who is Mr. Ryalls?

LILLY

He was just a man who boarded there at Aunt Margaret's. I got acquainted with him over there.

ED

(*Turning to look her full in the face a moment*)

How *well* did you git acquainted?

LILLY

(*In surprise*)

I . . . I don't know just what you mean.

ED

He don't happen to be a fellow you knowed last spring when you was over there, does he?

LILLY

Why, no, I never saw him before this time. And . . . he . . . he was purty nice to May Belle——

ED

And how about you?

LILLY

Well . . . why he treated me all right.

ED

(*Suddenly flaring out*)

By God, I reckon he did!

(*And he goes on with his cooking.*)

LILLY

(*Startled*)

Ed, what you so upset about? You said you'd heard about me. What . . . what have you heard?

ED

I reckon you been enjoying yerself all right.

LILLY

(*Dubiously*)

Yes, I sure have. (*Turning quickly to him.*) What's all this you're driving at?

ED

Nothing. (*After a moment.*) Looks like you could help me git a little supper—if you ain't above it.

(She leans against the table a moment, looking at her hands. Her brow is wrinkled in thought. Suddenly she looks up at his broad back with a touch of fear in her face.)

LILLY

Oh, what am I thinking about.—Here, you set down and let me fix for you. My goodness, you've burnt your meat slam to pieces! *(She bustles around the stove, putting in wood, cutting meat, and straightening the table, laying out dishes, etc.* ED *sticks the dish-cloth towards her, sits down in a chair and begins drumming on the table.)* How you been getting along?

ED

Oh, purty good. How's Aunt Margaret and all of 'em over there?

LILLY

All right. *(Fumbling in the cupboard.)* Cain't we have some eggs? (ED *makes no reply.)* Oh, here they are. My, my, the hens must have been a-laying! Must 'a' tuk a notion and started in all of a sudden. Ain't been eating many of 'm, have you?

ED

(Beginning to whistle a low meaningless tune and tapping with his fingertips on the table)

No, not many.

(He goes on whistling. LILLY *turns from her work now and then to glance at him. Her quickening movements show her nervous perturbation. She goes on talking.)*

LILLY

Has the little white pullet we set come off yet? She was to come off sometime this week.

ED

(Mechanically)

Uh huh.

(He continues whistling and tapping.)

LILLY

(Begins breaking the eggs into a dish)

How many eggs did she hatch? You know we put twelve under her. (ED *makes no reply, his eyes narrowing to slits and his jaw taking on a more and more firm look. His whistle is more pronounced and the tapping on the table sharper and more staccato. As* LILLY *moves around the table, she crunches a piece of the broken vase underfoot. Suddenly she stoops, finds the remains of the vase and flowers, and with an exclamation of pain and hurt, she gathers them up. She turns sharply towards* ED *with a defiant and bitter word on her lips, but his inner absorption deters her for the moment. Tears of anger glisten in her eyes. She stirs the eggs more and more rapidly. At last with a stifled sob she whirls upon him.)* Who

. . . who broke my purty blue vase? (*He makes no answer. She bursts out more shrilly.*) Ed Robinson, I want to know who broke my vase?

ED

(*Suddenly bringing his fist down on the table in a shattering blow and roaring out his words in a rage*)

Damn it to hell, I want to know what you been doin' with that Ryalls fellow over there at Dunn?

LILLY

(*Laying the remnants of the vase on the table and backing away from him*)

I . . . I ain't been doing nothing. What . . . you . . . mean?

ED

Yes, you have been doing something, or else. . . . (*She looks miserably into his face, his words dying away into a mutter. They both are silent a moment.* LILLY *twists the dried flowers in her hands.*

LILLY

What in the world's got into you? Somebody's been telling lies, that's what. Well—(*Defiantly.*) If you want to think *that* about your wife, go ahead and think what you please. I ain't done nothing I'm ashamed of, and that's the truth if I ever spoke it.

ED

Well, what you doing ridin' 'round with that Ryalls fellow—or whatever his name was?

LILLY

They wa'n't no harm in that. And, besides, he took May Belle around a sight more'n he did me.

ED

You went around enough to set everybody talkin' about you.

LILLY

'Tain't the first time they've talked about me, and—(*recklessly*) it may not be the last, if you cain't treat me any better than you have to-night.

ED

What . . . you . . . mean?

LILLY

I mean that I ain't goin' to be stormed at and driv 'round like a dumb brute by a slave-drivin' husband—that's what!

ED

You needn't to r'ar so. Why'd you stay away another week, and me here with the cotton all fallin' out and nobody to pick it? Ain't no other woman in the neighborhood'd treat her man so.

LILLY

No, they ain't. They're all plumb fools!

(She turns to the stove, her lips trembling in anger, and begins putting the supper on the table.)

ED

(Presently)

Lilly, I've tried to treat you right, but a man cain't stand everything.

LILLY

(Now and then wiping the tears from her eyes)

Come on and eat yer supper.

(She waits for him.)

ED

I don't want nothin'.

LILLY

Ed, come on and eat. *(After a moment.)* Cain't we have a little peace? Seems lak . . . seems lak . . .

(Stifling a sob.)

ED

(Moving to the table and slouching his heavy arms down on it. He begins eating in huge mouthfuls as if he would drown his wrath with food. He lays down his knife and looks at her, sitting in her chair near the stove)

Ain't you goin' ter take a bite yourself?

LILLY

I ain't hongry nuther.

ED

Oh . . . well . . . (*He goes on eating. Presently he shoves his plate from him and leans his head on his hands.*) You . . . don't seem glad much to be back home.

LILLY

(*Cleaning the dough from her fingers with a hairpin*)

You shore don't seem glad to see me back either.

ED

Well . . . I reckon I am, too . . . but—(*He lapses into silence. Suddenly he flares out.*) I want to know what in the devil is up 'tween you and that man?

LILLY

(*Laughing nervously*)

Well you won't know, 'cause they ain't nothin' betwixt us. But I can tell you this, if it'll do you any good, he knows a heap sight better how to treat a woman than you do.

ED

I reckon he does—if she's the kind of a woman he wants to treat.

LILLY

Watch out what you're sayin', Ed Robinson.

ED

I am watchin'. They ain't no woman with a grain o' sense in her head 'd be flying around with a fellow lak that, and her husband at home workin' his head off. And you orter know that.

LILLY

He took me to a pictur' show onct or twice, and give me a good time, and that's more than you've ever thought of doing the five long years I've been married to you. (*A pause.*) There you set in that there chair, laying down the gospel to me. Well, I'm goin' ter tell you a thing or two right now. You'd *kill* any woman God ever made, with your hard, stingy ways. (*She rises from her chair and stands before him.*) Oh, yes you would. You don't care for nothin' but a mule to plow in the day time and a shuck mattress to sleep on at night—that you don't; and a-always laying up for land, always a-talking about it, and lettin' me and everything I want go with never a thought.

ED

(*Weakening*)

Well, Lilly, you hadn't ort to——

LILLY

Hadn't ort to what, I'd like to know. I've worked for you, washed your clothes, hoed your grassy corn, and you off fishing, stayed here at night, with you and Jeems Atkins 'possum huntin' in the swamp, and

me so lonesome I jest lay there listenin' to the wind whistlin' through the trees. And I've set out your rations over this here table three-hundred and sixty-five days in the year for five long winters and summers, and I ain't never heard a dozen sweet words out'n you the whole time. God *help* me! Who wouldn't go crazy for a sight of a town and purty things onct in a while?

ED

(*Mumbling*)

I cain't see why you always got to be thinkin' o' somethin' better'n you got—that I cain't.

LILLY

(*Swallowing her sobs*)

That you cain't. You're blind as a bat. All you study is yourself.—Look at Jim Cooper—worked his head off—after you to do the same, though the Lord knows you don't need no coaxing about saving money. Look at him. And then, look at his wife. She's nothing but a ghost of a woman. She won't cast a shadow in the sun she's so thin. He's run her to death, the dirty devil!

ED

(*With a show of anger*)

She's been a good wife to him, that's what. She ain't never had no crazy notions about gettin' fixin's, and movin' to town and dressing up in finery, and smearing herself in paint—like them hussies in Dunn.

And you might ca'm yerself and not fly complete off'n the handle.

LILLY

How you know she ain't? What do you men know about a woman's wants anyway?—Nothin', not nothin'. She ain't never had the heart to go ag'in his wishes, poor thing. But Ed Robinson, here's one ain't goin' ter be druv' lak that. I come back home to tell you that. Leonard Ryalls showed me that they's things in this world you ain't never dreamt of. And I've made up my mind from now on to have my way about a few things, I will that!

ED

(*With a hurt in his voice*)

God a'mighty, ain't you had your way! They ain't another man in the country would let his wife go off and stay three weeks and him pickin' out her own cotton.

LILLY

How much o' yourn have I picked, I'd lak to know? Don't you say nothin' to me about work, don't you!

(*She drops down in her chair and begins sobbing.*)

ED

Now you needn't think crying'll git you anything. (*He moves around the room, kicks at the table, seats himself again.*) Shet up yer crying, Lilly. (*She*

rocks in her grief. He watches her a moment.) Shet up, I tell you! They'll hear you slam over to Mr. Jim's.

(*He picks up a biscuit and begins chewing on it.* LILLY *bursts out into another tirade.*)

LILLY

(*In shrill anger*)

Let them hear me! I don't care if the whole world was a-watching me. I got reason to cry, I have. (*Then she grows more calm, and speaks with more control but with more bitterness.*) I'm goin' ter say something to you now, Ed Robinson, I ain't never said to nobody before.

(*She pauses a moment, swallowing hard.*)

ED

Say it if you want to—but it seems you've said enough fer one night.

LILLY

(*Getting up and going to the door, she opens it and stands looking out into the darkness. Quietly*)

I can see way yonder that clump o' pines black against the sky.

ED

(*Uneasily*)

Come on back, Lilly, and eat a bite o' supper.

LILLY

I can see them trees there looking all thick

and dark and . . . (*turning back vehemently into the room*) you know what I'm thinking of—you know well enough.

ED

(*Getting up quickly and closing the door, pushing her gently away*)

You quit that lookin' out thar. (*Kindly.*) Come on, gal, drink some coffee . . . or somethin'.

(*He stands at the stove stirring a pan idly.*)

LILLY

I'm goin' ter tell you. (*A pause, twisting her dress in her hand.*) Who was too stingy to have a doctor? Who said they wa'n't no use putting up screens in the house? Who said all them new-fangled idees 'bout baby food and taking care was foolishness? You did, you did! And that's the reason he's out there dead and buried under them pines, with his little white dress all wet and rotten. You killed him, that's what you did, you *killed* him!

(*She sits down in her chair with the tears rolling down her face.*)

ED

(*In a stifled voice*)

Lilly . . . Lilly, don't——

LILLY

I jest wanted you to know that you are just as much a murderer as if you shot a man down in the road—yes, and a sight worse!

ED

I didn't . . . I didn't know . . . Lilly . . .

(*He looks at her in pain.*)

LILLY

Thank God, it hurts you a little bit. (ED *sits down at the table, staring before him with set face.* LILLY *speaks very quietly.*) Now that I've told you how I feel about it maybe you won't think it so quair that I want to git away from you onct in a while.

ED

(*Uncomprehendingly*)

You don't mean . . . you don't believe all that, do you, Lilly? Do you feel that way about it? Shore enough? . . .

(*He turns away, choking.*)

LILLY

So you did like him some yourself, didn't you? But you see it's too late now. You see, Ed, you can tap on the table and make a funny gooin' sound, and he won't answer you from over there in the corner on his pallet. (ED *looks up perplexed.*) Try it and see. He can't, you know, for he's dead . . . dead . . . dead . . . dead.

ED

What . . . what you mean?

(*He stares at her blankly.*)

LILLY

You watch me now. (*She goes to the door, opens it, and calls.*) Charlie! Charlie, come here! (*Her voice goes out across the dark.* ED'S *amazement increases. She closes the door softly and turns back to him.*) You didn't hear him answer, did you, Ed? No, I could call, and call, and call, and he wouldn't make a sound. Oh, yes, I used to call when you was out in the fields workin'—oh yes, I did. But you didn't hear me then. But you hear me now, don't you?

ED

What'n the name o' God ails you?

LILLY

You couldn't understand if I told you. (*She looks around the room.*) Ed, did you bring in my flowers off the porch at night the way I told you to? (ED *makes no reply. She goes out and brings in a pot.*) No you didn't. Here's my purtiest geranium all frost-bitten. (*She crumples up the leaves in her hand.*) All the others is dead . . . dead. You see how it is, Ed. You kill things you tech.

ED

Lilly, I forgot all about them flowers.

LILLY

No, you mean you didn't never think of 'em.

(*She sits down wearily, thinking. They both are silent. Presently* ED *begins watching her.*)

Scene from *Fixin's*, the tragedy of a tenant-farm woman, by Erma and Paul Greene. LILLY ROBINSON (Frances Gray) and ED ROBINSON (Charles Pritchett).

LILLY: Here's my purtiest geranium all frost-bitten. . . . All the others is dead . . . dead. . . . You see how it is, Ed. You kill things you tech.

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

ED

Say something. Don't set there—so still lak.

LILLY

I was jest thinkin' that . . . it'd take a long time to git any flowers growing agin lak them you killed.

ED

I told you I forgot 'em, and I didn't kill 'em. Don't lay that to me.

LILLY

It'd take too long, wouldn't it? . . . And I guess we've about come to the end of our rope, hain't we, Ed?

ED

I don't un . . . der . . . stand. What . . . you . . . mean?

LILLY

I didn't think you would.

(*She sits tapping her fingers.*)

ED

(*Unable to endure the silence any longer*)

Le's don't keep on lak this. Mebbe I ain't done you . . . well—mebbe not just right. Mebbe nuther of us 's done tother'n jest right.

LILLY

Maybe not. That's mighty hard to do as I've found out . . . after a long time.

ED

Le's sorter forgit about all this mix-up, and go on. Things'll turn out better; they always do.

LILLY

I didn't expect to hear you say that.

ED

But, Lilly, that fellow—shore you didn't mean nothin' by goin' around with him, did you?

LILLY

(*Thoughtfully*)

I mought 'a meant a lot,—who knows?

ED

(*Bitterly*)

You talk lak that an 'spect me to be humble as a dog.

LILLY

You needn't worry about him. He and May Belle was married to-day before I left. I helped 'em decorate all the week. That's what I wanted to stay over for.

ED

(*A joy breaking in his voice*)

Is that so? I knowed somehow they was talkin' out'n their heads when they said all that about you. (*Sincerely.*) I'm sorry as kin be about that vase. But I'll git you another one, that I will.

LILLY

(*With gentle irony*)

There's a bed-room suite over there in Holiday's store I was looking at for seventy dollars. It's priced at a hundred; but he said I could have it for seventy, if I'd send for it in the morning. Do you think you could go for it in the morning, Ed?

ED

(*Quickly*)

I mought. (*Dubiously.*) But that's a heap o' money to put in on sich fixin's.

LILLY

But they ought to be enough of my cotton money to buy that. And I was wondering if you couldn't take off my cotton then and sell it.

ED

But . . . Lilly . . . I . . .

LILLY

Well, you needn't to, if you don't want to? But I was just thinking. . . .

ED

(*Blurting out*)

I sold it to-day.

LILLY

(*Still going on in her even voice*)

You did?

ED

Yes, and . . . and . . . I tell you . . . I let Mr. Jim have that money.

LILLY

(*A flame in her voice for a moment*)

Oh, yes, the same way you done time and time ag'in —give me a cotton patch, and then by hook or crook get me to believing you needed it worse'n I did. Women don't need money lak men, do they?

ED

But I kin git it back; I know I kin. He begged it out'n me to fix up the deal about . . . about the land. I'll go over thar right now and get him to break it off.

(*He stirs in search of his hat and old overcoat.*)

LILLY

(*Pleasantly*)

You needn't bother about it. (*Almost yawning.*) 'Tain't no use now.

ED

(*Again perplexed*)

Lilly, what ails you anyhow? You act quair at times.——(*Hurriedly.*) But I'll go and get it right now.

(*He pulls on his coat. There is a noise of stamping feet on the porch. Ed slips off his coat.*)

LILLY

There's somebody coming in.

(*She picks up her coat and puts it on. There is a knock on the door.*)

ED

Come in.

(JIM COOPER *enters.*)

COOPER

What'n the world's all this racket over here about? We heard it clean over home. (ED *stares at the floor.*) Oh, hello, Lilly. Come back, have you?

LILLY

(*Pulling on her hat*)

Yes, but I'm passing by. . . .

ED

Mr. Jim, I just started over to your house to see you. Lilly ain't satisfied about that trade. She

wants her money back. Mebbe I ain't done jest right about it anyhow.

COOPER

I'll swear. Goin' ter let her run over you ag'in? Lilly, ain't you got no sense? Cain't you quit thinking about yerself long enough to help Ed git a start in the world?

LILLY

I ain't asked him to get it back. It'd be fine if Mis' Mary could ask you a question or two, wouldn't it?

COOPER

(*Blinking*)

None o' yer sassy talk.

ED

Mr. Jim, I'll have to back out about that trade. That was Lilly's cotton money, and if you'll give it back, I'll fix it somehow. (LILLY *picks up her suitcase and moves towards the door.*) What you mean? (*In alarm.*) Where you goin'?

LILLY

(*Blankly*)

I'm . . . jest . . . goin'. You all can fix up about the money to suit yourselves. I don't want none of it.

COOPER

What'n the thunder is all this foolishness about?

(Ed *stands with his hand on the knob of the door. The two men eye her in astonishment.*)

Lilly

I told Ed a minute ago that we had come to the end of our rope. (*Turning to* Cooper.) You know what that means, don't you? Maybe you don't, but Mis' Mary does. Ask her when you get back home, Good-by to you, Ed. . . .

Ed

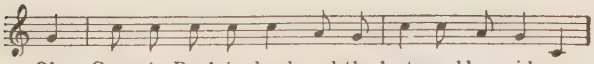
(*Amazed*)

Where you goin' this time o' night? What? . . .

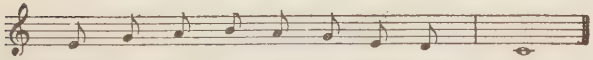
Lilly

It don't matter. I'm a-goin' all right. And I ain't never coming back never . . . never . . . never. (*She pronounces the words with the same intonation as "dead . . . dead . . . dead."*) Good-by ag'in to you all.

(*She goes out, closing the door behind her—singing, as she goes.*)



Oh, Georgie Buck is dead, and the last word he said, was,



"Nev - er let a wo-man have her way."

Repeat Refrain

"Never let a woman have her way."

COOPER

(*Puzzled*)

Ed, what ails her? You ain't goin' ter let her go off lak that, are you, traipsing out into the night?

ED

(*Blankly, dropping down into a chair*)

I dunno . . . what she means.

COOPER

(*Taking the money from his pocket*)

Here—here's yer money, Ed. I ain't anxious about that trade if you ain't. . . .

ED

I dunno . . . I dunno . . . exactly. . . .

SLOW CURTAIN

THE BEADED BUCKLE[1]

A Comedy of Village Aristocracy

By

Frances Gray

[1] Copyright, 1924, by The Carolina Playmakers, Inc. All rights reserved. Permission to produce this play may be secured by addressing Frederick H. Koch, Director, The Carolina Playmakers, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 8th and 9th, 1924.

MRS. AGNES MILLER, *a charming widow,* Anne Majette

JOSEPH CONROY MILLER, *her son, a University student,* Marion Dixon

MRS. LOUISE BAILEY, *a neighbor,* Vinton Liddell

MRS. BERKELEY, *a gossip,* Polly Wells

HERB SHINE, *proprietor of the "Metropolitan Store,"* Claudius Mintz

LEONA KING, *his clerk,* Miriam Sauls

SCENE: Mrs Miller's living room, Glendale, North Carolina.

TIME: The present. An afternoon in May.

SCENE

THE scene is the living room of MRS. AGNES MILLER. *A door and window in the rear wall look out upon the village street. The room is furnished to conform to* MRS. MILLER'S *aristocratic taste: old portraits on the wall, a vase of fresh roses from her garden on the small table at left; a large sofa, a what-not and several chairs of Colonial design—family heirlooms, evidently. The telephone is on the table at the left. Beside the table is a large chair in which* JOE MILLER *is seated, reading a popular magazine and smoking a collegiate-looking little pipe. He is a well-built, handsome youth hardly out of his teens.*

MRS. LOUISE BAILEY *enters hurriedly. She is a woman of forty-five, inconspicuously but a bit carelessly dressed in a dark blue voile. Her manner and appearance suggest her generous outlook on life. She has evidently come on an important errand.*

LOUISE
(*Calling*)

Agnes, oh Agnes! (*She sees* JOE *who has risen.*) Hello, Joe, what are you doing at home?

JOE

(*Goes to greet her*)

How're you, Miss Louise, mighty glad to see you. I just hopped off for the week-end. I don't know where mother is. But sit down and wait, she'll be in pretty soon, I reckon.

LOUISE

(*Sitting in* JOE'S *chair*)

Yes, I will stay, Joe. I've got something very important to tell your mother. I suppose she's still at Sadie's tea.

JOE

(*Drawing up a chair for himself*)

Well, I wish she'd come on home. Seems like a year since I've seen her.

LOUISE

(*Laughing*)

It hasn't been quite a year since the Easter holidays, but I know Agnes will be glad to see you. How'd you leave the Hill?

JOE

Oh, quite as I found it. Very pleasant, but slightly monotonous.

LOUISE

Chapel Hill isn't exciting, but it's a mighty sweet old place. . . . Studying hard?

JOE

Yes'm, I'm keeping my nose to the grindstone. You know I entered the law school this quarter.

LOUISE

Yes, so your mother told me. I'm glad that you did, Joe. If you're as much like your father on the inside as you are on the outside, you ought to make a good lawyer.

JOE

Thank you, ma'am. Daddy was a good lawyer. And I thought it was the natural thing to do; a legal mind kind of runs in the family.

LOUISE

I declare it's a pity that Joe, senior, couldn't live to see you grow up. He was so proud of you.

JOE

I wish I could remember Daddy better. Mother says he had the strongest mind and the clearest vision. . . .

LOUISE

He was a born lawyer, and he was just as fair as the day is long.

JOE

(*Fervently*)

That's my idea of greatness. To be fair, to be

above prejudice, to have an unerring sense of elemental justice!

LOUISE
(*Quietly*)

It's a great thing to have.

JOE
(*Rising*)

I want to be able to stand on a mountain and look at the whole show and see all sides dispassionately. To be ruled by no emotion!

LOUISE

We couldn't live without emotion, Joe.

JOE

But emotion doesn't have to obscure the truth. I want to be so just that I could judge the most charming person in the world without being biased—so just that I could judge my own mother!

LOUISE

My! What law book did you get that oration out of?—I wish your mother'd come on home.

JOE

So do I. I sure do want to see her. What's she doing these days?

LOUISE

Oh, she's flirting outrageously with Colonel Haywood, whom she has no idea of marrying.

JOE

(*Laughing*)

The one with the bay window?

LOUISE

You ought to see the way Agnes "strings" him. She smiles up at him like he's the only man on earth. She'd put a sixteen year old school girl to shame!

JOE

You know I marvel at mother. The way she keeps so young, and she's such good company.

LOUISE

Yes, Agnes is a good companion.

JOE

She's the best I've ever seen. And she's pretty. No wonder the Colonel fell for her.

LOUISE

Well, Agnes always had plenty of beaux, but she's devoted her life to you, Joe.

JOE

She's been wonderful. She's been a mother and

father both. . . . (*Meditating.*) And she's got a conscience like a man's. She's the soul of honor!

LOUISE

But she always gets what she wants.

JOE

Because she's lovely. Everybody falls for her charm. She could get away with murder.

LOUISE

Yes, . . . I believe she could.—I wish she'd come on; it's getting late, but I've *got* to see her.

JOE

If you're in a hurry I'll take a message.

LOUISE

Thank you, no. I'd better wait. But, (*Hesitating*) Joe—

JOE

Ma'am?

LOUISE

I suppose I ought to tell you, too. . . . People are saying things about Agnes that I don't like.

JOE

(*Abruptly*)

Do you mean that some one has said something uncomplimentary about my mother?

LOUISE

Hold your horses, Joe. You can't do me any good if you fly up.

JOE

Well, I shan't permit——

LOUISE

Please give me a chance to talk. Can't you think quietly about this?

JOE

I hope I am old enough to be cool.

LOUISE

(*Sitting on the sofa*)

I hope so too. Come sit down, and let me tell you about it. You remember that lavender dress your mother had summer before last—the one with the fringe?

JOE

Yes'm.

LOUISE

Well, she had it dyed and she wanted a distinctive ornament for it.

JOE

(*Perplexed*)

Well—what under——

LOUISE

But she couldn't find anything in town that wasn't ordinary.

JOE

Naturally.

LOUISE

Then day before yesterday, it seems, she went into the Metropolitan Clothing Store and she saw a very commonplace dress, ornamented with a beautiful beaded buckle.

JOE

(*Impatiently*)

Did she buy the dress?

LOUISE

She didn't want the dress, Joe. She wanted the buckle; but when she asked the clerk to sell it to her, she refused to sell it without the dress.

JOE

Those clerks are the dumbest!

LOUISE

Agnes finally sent her to ask the manager, but the manager said that he wouldn't take the buckle off the dress.

JOE

And poor mother couldn't get anything?

LOUISE

Agnes was very much irritated. So she went to the back of the store with the clerk to ask the manager again to sell it.

JOE

And he refused *again?*

LOUISE

Yes, he refused again. So your mother just left them back there and walked out of the store. But, Joe,—the next time they looked at the dress *the buckle was gone!*

(*There is a silence.*)

JOE

You reckon the sales-girl took it?

LOUISE

Probably. . . . Though she's a mighty nice girl. Leona King—you know her.

JOE

Yes, she was in my class at High School. Too bad.

LOUISE

But of course she doesn't admit it. She and old Herb Shine say that . . . Agnes *stole* the beaded buckle!

JOE

(*Dumfounded*)

That *my mother stole a buckle?*

(JOE *rises, visibly angry.*)

LOUISE

Isn't it preposterous? But the worst part is that to-day Agnes walked into the "Metropolitan" wearing the spit image of the lost buckle.

JOE

Was old Herb Shine impertinent to her?

LOUISE

Oh, no. He hasn't nerve enough to be impertinent. He just asked Agnes where she got her buckle.

JOE

And what did mother say?

LOUISE

Why, she said she ordered it from Raleigh.

JOE

I reckon old Shine took a back seat then.

LOUISE

But he didn't. He and Leona started telling the town that Agnes stole——(JOE *starts toward the door.*) Why, Joe, where are you going?

JOE

I'm going to kill Herbert Shine!

LOUISE

(*Restraining him*)

Now listen to me, Joe. You be calm, and wait——

JOE

Do you think I can be calm while the scum of the earth is slandering my mother?

LOUISE

You'd better wait and consult your mother before you do any killing.

(MRS. AGNES MILLER *enters. She is a gracious woman of forty, combining the freshness of a girl with the poise of a matron. Her soft beguiling voice is very sweet, and her arrogance is an inherent part of her charm. She wears a delicate lavender gown with a vivid beaded buckle on the hip. She pauses in the doorway when she sees Joe; then, with a little cry, she rushes to him.*

AGNES

Oh Joe! Where did you drop from, you precious lamb, you . . . (*Embracing him.*) Oh, you're so strong; you'll break every bone in my body. . . . Why didn't you let me know you were coming? I'd have had a party for you.

JOE

I didn't want a party, Mother. I wanted to see *you.*

AGNES

Aren't you the quintessence of gallantry? (*She holds him at arm's length.*) Stand off there and let me look at you . . . just let me look at . . . Isn't he beautiful, Louise? (LOUISE *smiles indulgently.*) Do you know I haven't seen him since Easter?—Isn't he perfectly lovely? Son, you're so beautiful I just can't stand it! . . . Look at me straight in the eyes and tell me the truth, Joseph.

JOE

Yes, Mother, my word is as good as my bond.

AGNES

Are you getting enough to eat?

JOE

Yes'm, absolutely! On my honor!

AGNES

(*Surveying him*)

I don't know . . . you look a little wan. Don't you think so, Louise?

LOUISE

Well, no—not particularly, Agnes.

AGNES

But you're perfect anyway. You're just perfect! Why are you so perfect, son?

JOE

(*Joking*)

Because Miss Louise is my godmother, I guess.

LOUISE

No, I don't take any of the credit, Joe.

AGNES

But what have I ever done to deserve such a son?

JOE

If you had your deserts——

AGNES

Did you ever see a boy so unconscious of his own beauty? (JOE *admits this.*) See how straight he holds himself! I love him to distraction! Come here, angel, and kiss your poor old down-trodden mammy.

JOE

(*Kissing her fondly*)

Mother, you look like a full-blown rose.

AGNES

Isn't it a blessing to have a dear appreciative child in your old age? Especially when he's all you've

got in the world. Lou, do you think you could ever love one of yours like I love Joe?

LOUISE

Oh, I think I love 'em enough. But I *know* that if I raved about my six like you rave about Joe they'd think I was crazy.

AGNES

But he's so perfect!

LOUISE

(*Laughing*)

They all are.

AGNES

(*Going over to the table discovers* JOE'S *pipe*)

I thought I smelled this horrible old thing. That's all right, Joe. If you can't "smell up" your own mother's house, whose house can you smell up? (*Removing her hat.*) Don't you like my dress?

(JOE *and* LOUISE *exchange glances.*)

JOE

Yes, mother, but——

LOUISE

Agnes, I came to tell you about that dress. Everybody is talking——

AGNES

What's the matter? Has some old gossip-monger discovered that it's about a hundred years old?

LOUISE
(*Hurriedly*)

Agnes, I might as well tell you. . . . Mr. Shine and Leona King say that you stole that buckle!

AGNES

That I *stole* this buckle!

LOUISE

They say that you went in their store.

AGNES

Yes, I went in their store. I admit I went in their store. I went in their store because there are no decent stores in this town to go in!

LOUISE

And you wanted them to sell you a beaded buckle.

AGNES

Yes, it was the only pretty thing in the store, and they refused to sell it to me without a tacky little dress. Refused to sell *me* a buckle! When it's only my patronage and that of my friends that has kept the doors of that store open at all. It's the insolence of it that I despise. I can remember when old Herb Shine was——

LOUISE

They say that after you left they looked at the dress and the buckle was gone!

AGNES

And therefore I took it. I took their beaded buckle! It's pitiful how the insignificant love to slander their superiors. I suppose they will attempt to blackmail me.

JOE

(*Passionately*)

I'm going to beat up that swine——

AGNES

No, Joe, no! You can't do that and get all this in the papers. Your mother's name in the papers in such a story. We can't court publicity. We'll have to hush this thing up. Of course that little Leona has lied to all her friends, and that stratum of Glendale society considers me a thief——

JOE

The low-down blood-suckers—the gully dirt—the——

LOUISE

Joe, I thought it was you who were orating to me about level-headedness. Calm down and try to see their point of view.

JOE

They have no point of view—they——

LOUISE

Oh, yes, they have. The buckle is gone. Of

course it's ridiculous for old Shine to say that Agnes took it, but he thinks he's right. There's nothing to be mad about.

JOE

Mad! Of course I'm mad! I'm fighting mad! I'm mad because they have displeased my mother!

AGNES

I'll have to see them myself. I'll have to see that this thing is stopped immediately. It isn't fair to Joe to allow his mother's name to be——

LOUISE

I wouldn't go down there if I were you, Agnes.

AGNES

No, indeed. They shall come up here, and I shall tell them to be quiet. I go down there indeed! They must come to me. I'll make them go down on their knees! I'll—— (*She sweeps to the telephone.*) One, seven, eight, please. May I speak to Mr. Shine? . . . How do you do, Mr. Shine? This is Mrs. Joseph Conroy Miller of Myrtle Hill. I wish you and Miss King to confer with me at my home immediately. . . . No. . . . To-morrow will not do. . . . No, I shall not be free to see you this evening. . . . Very well, Mr. Shine, but I think it would be to your advantage to come immediately. . . . I shall expect you in a few minutes, then. Thank you. (*She*

hangs up the receiver and turns to LOUISE *and* JOE.) The idea of their refusing to sell me a buckle in the first place. I needed that buckle to complete my costume! What does he keep his messy little store for anyway, if it's not to serve me?

JOE

Oh, Mother, I can't stand it!

LOUISE

(*By the window*)

Agnes, there goes Mrs. Berkeley looking like she's full of a mean tale.

AGNES

Oh, I bet she's spreading the buckle story. We'll call her in. (*She rushes to door.*) Oh, Mrs. Berkeley, come in a minute. (*To* JOE.) Joe, she's a newcomer trying to break into society and she has the most abominable tongue in town. (MRS. BERKELEY *at the door.*) Why, how-do-you-do, Mrs. Berkeley. Come in, I want to show you my jewels.

MRS. BERKELEY

(*Observing the buckle*)

Your jewels? . . . How do you do, Mrs. Bailey.

AGNES

Yes; my child, and my first roses! This is my son Joseph. How do you like him?

MRS. BERKELEY
(*Coyly*)

I'm afraid that, if I told him, I might embarrass him.

JOE

I am not easily embarrassed. . . . I go to the University.

AGNES

He's really quite nice when you know him. But oh, Mrs. Berkeley, I have a choice bit of gossip.

(*She motions her to a chair.*)

MRS. BERKELEY

What is it? Do tell me, my dear.

AGNES
(*Sitting beside her*)

It's about this beaded buckle. It seems I stole it.

MRS. BERKELEY

You stole it!

AGNES

So I hear. It seems that I went into the Metropolitan Store, knocked the clerk down, snatched the buckle, and ran out of the store with the whole works

crying after me, "Stop thief!" Can you imagine that?

MRS. BERKELEY

How absurd.

AGNES

Yes, it would be amusing, if it were somebody else. The little sales-girl evidently took it. I'm not going to say anything about it, though. I really feel sorry for her. Starved for beauty, I suppose. (*Sweetly.*) Of course all this is confidential.

MRS. BERKELEY

(*Eagerly*)

Of course.

AGNES

(*Rising and taking the roses from vase*)

And Mrs. Berkeley, as you go, I want you to take these; they're the first from my garden.

MRS. BERKELEY

Why, they're lovely. It's awfully sweet of you.

AGNES

Oh, can't you and Mr. Berkeley drop in for bridge to-night?

MRS. BERKELEY

(*Flattered*)

We'd be very pleased to come!

AGNES

(*She has ushered her to the door*)

I shall expect you then—about eight. And remember, don't breathe that buckle story to a soul.

MRS. BERKELEY

Oh, no! That's confidential. Good-by. So glad to have seen you.

(*She goes out, passing by the window*)

LOUISE

That settles her. She'll spread your version.

JOE

She looks like a cat.

AGNES

She'll spread my side; but there'll always be people in town who'll believe that I stole that buckle!

LOUISE

It's horrid for you. But I believe old Shine and Leona will soon need more sympathy than you do.

JOE

If mother'll let me alone, Shine will.

LOUISE

(*Starting out*)

Well, I'll run before the fight begins. My cook got married last week and——

AGNES

Louise, you're just lovely to come tell me. You're the living example of true friendship.

LOUISE

Oh, Agnes, don't take on so. I've got to run and fix supper.

AGNES

I don't see how anybody can be a cook and a lady at the same time. But you could step right off of an ash can and say the right thing at the right time—— Oh, by the way, dear, the Colonel is coming to dinner this evening, and he has a plebeian passion for boiled onions. And oh, Lou, should you mind if I sent them over to your house to be boiled? They make the house smell so bad.

LOUISE

Why——Agnes Miller! You certainly can flatter and insult in the same breath. But, no, I don't mind. Send them along. Bye bye.

(*She goes*)

AGNES

Louise is pure gold! But, Joe, isn't it strange how some people can be born and bred with no conception of honor? Like that little Leona King—— people who don't even know it's wrong to lie, or, if they do, as your Great-uncle Sam said to your Great-uncle Fred, "the worst of it is, they don't give a damn!"

JOE

Mother, say "damn" again. You do it so charmingly!

AGNES

Why, dear, you know I never said "damn" in my life! . . . Joe, did you think your own mother would ever be called a thief?

JOE

Mother, please let me *kill* that man.

AGNES

No, no, not for the world. But—as if it would have been stealing if I had taken his old buckle! Why the thing wasn't worth two dollars and it's only my patronage—and then to be rewarded in this way!

JOE

That stripe of trash doesn't know the word gratitude.

AGNES

By the way, dear, what's the law about libel?

JOE

(*Hesitating*)

We haven't taken that up yet.

(*There is a knock at the door.*)

AGNES

Answer it, Joe. And wait, dear, be kind and firm. Hold up your shoulders and remember that you have the best blood of North Carolina in your veins.

(*A second knock.* JOE *opens the door.* HERB SHINE *and* LEONA KING *enter. He is old and wizened.* LEONA *is pretty in an unrefined way.*)

AGNES

(*Sitting on the sofa*)

Good afternoon, Mr. Shine. How do you do, Leona?

SHINE

(*Bowing and scraping*)

Good evenin', Mrs. Miller.

LEONA

(*Coyly*)

How 'do. Heyo, Joe.

JOE

(*Formally*)

How do you do, Miss King.

AGNES

Won't you sit down? (*They sit.*) I called you here, Mr. Shine and Leona, because I hear that you have been maligning my character.

SHINE

(*Embarrassed*)

You don't want to believe all you hear, Mrs. Miller.

AGNES

Am I to understand that you have not said, Mr. Shine, that I took from your store a beaded buckle?

SHINE

Wal now, Mrs. Miller——

AGNES

Mr. Shine, do you think that there is any sane person in Glendale who would believe that I stole a buckle from you? Don't you realize that to refuse to sell me a buckle in the first place was insolence? Don't you?

SHINE

Mrs. Miller, we've always been good friends—and I'd like to have given you the buckle but——

AGNES

Mr. Shine, I have never taken a gift from you and I never expect to. You know, I suppose, that it is from me and my friends that you get your bread and butter. Your little old store isn't any good. You never keep anything fit to wear. We always have to go to Raleigh in the end. But we keep on trading

with you out of kindness—that's all that keeps you out of bankruptcy. And, in offending me, you have offended the best people in Glendale.

SHINE
(*Cringing*)

They ain't any reason to get offended, Mrs. Miller. I've allus been your friend. 'Twas jus' two winters ago that I knocked five dollars off'n your winter blankets.

AGNES

There is no use mincing words. You two have borne false witness against me. You are guilty of a horrible crime . . . the crime of libel! My son, who is a law student at the University, has informed me that I can have you put in jail for sixty days, and heavily fined.

SHINE

Oh, Mrs. Miller, I hope you don't believe I've said nothin' against you. I don't know who started that lie about me, but you know I never said that you——

AGNES

I'm glad you understand how serious libel is. My duty to society is to have you sent to the penitentiary. My son has urged me to prosecute you to the full extent of the law.

LEONA
(*Impertinently*)

I never heard of that law before.

AGNES

There are a great many things you have never heard of before, Leona, and one of them, I regret to say, is the truth. I don't want to cast doubt upon you, but are you sure that you don't know where that beaded buckle is?

LEONA

(*Stiffening and glaring at* AGNES' *belt.*)

No'm, I haven't said I didn't know where the buckle was——

SHINE

(*Taking courage*)

She saw you——

JOE

You're a liar!

SHINE

Wal—it's better for me to lie than for you to lose your manners.

(AGNES *gives* JOE'S *hand an admonishing squeeze.*)

AGNES

I could have you both put in jail to-morrow. But I'm not going to prosecute you. I'm not even going to have my friends boycott you, but I want you to know that I could. I need only speak the word, and no *lady* would ever set foot in your store again.

SHINE

Let's don't have no hard feelin's, ma'am. It's sho' kind of you to do that way arter what Leona said.

LEONA

(*Insisting*)

Well, the buckle was gone.

AGNES

And when I walked in with a similar buckle on my dress you jumped to the conclusion that I had stolen it. Leona, I permitted my son to go to the Public High School. I am not a stickler for caste, but I am forced to speak of it to you. Don't you understand that I am well known in Glendale? That my family for generations has stood for honor and integrity? Don't you see that any one of consequence would laugh at the idea of my stealing a buckle?

LEONA

(*Weakening*)

Well, I couldn't see where it went to.

AGNES

I was terribly hurt that it was you who said these things, Leona, because you are the only clerk in town who has any taste. I had always felt perfectly safe when I traded with you, but now . . .

LEONA

(*Showing signs of breaking down*)

Well, you know how sometimes when you're worried you . . . s-s-say things. . . .

AGNES

(*Impulsively*)

Yes, dear, I know. But we mustn't let our tongues run away with us. We must always be sure that they are telling the truth.

LEONA

(*Crying*)

I didn't mean . . .

AGNES

I'm glad you're sorry, Leona. Now we can be friends again. I've liked you ever since you were a little girl with such pretty hair—I see you've still got it—and it's all for your own good that I'm saying this. I would hate for you to get into trouble, and the easiest way to do it is to begin talking about people behind their backs and stooping to petty dishonesties——

LEONA

(*Snivelling*)

I wasn't dishonest——

AGNES

Of course you weren't intentionally, but it wasn't right to slander me, Leona. Don't cry, here, take my handkerchief and keep it—to remember me by.

LEONA

(*Sobbing and blowing her nose*)

It smells so sweet!

AGNES

Mr. Shine, I told you that I got this buckle from Raleigh. (*She takes a paper from purse.*) Here is a bill for it.

(SHINE *reaches for it.*)

JOE

(*Rushing toward him*)

Can't you take my mother's word? You look at that bill and I'll break your neck!

(*The bill slips to the floor.*)

SHINE

(*Placating*)

Naw . . . now, it don't make no difference; and, Mrs. Miller, if any of your friends speaks o' this fool story again, you kin tell 'em thet . . . now 's I think about it, I believe I *saw that buckle slip through a hole in the floor!*

LEONA

(*Relieved*)

Yes, there *was* a hole in the floor.

AGNES

Very well, I suppose that's just what happened. I knew you would explain things to me and that we could be good friends again. Thank you so much for coming. And now—good-by. Good-by, Leona.

HERB SHINE AND LEONA
(*Going*)

Good-by.

JOE

Mother, you are the most diabolically clever person! Why, they reacted so to your charm that they left here feeling that you had paid them a compliment.

AGNES

(*Laughing gaily and sinking down on the sofa, she looks adoringly at* JOE *who is standing by the door*)

Well, what's charm good for, if it doesn't get reaction? Oh, dear, I'm so sorry all this happened while you were at home. Come sit down by me and tell me everything.

(JOE *starts to obey but stoops to pick up the bill. She raises her hand to detain him, but immediately recovers her composure.* JOE *looks at his mother with an amused chuckle.*)

JOE

Mother, this isn't the bill for the buckle. It's a bill for my new "Tuck!"

AGNES

Is it, dear? I declare . . . I was about to show them the wrong bill! But you saved me. You reacted wonderfully, too!

JOE

(*Trying to be casual*)

But, Mother . . . where *is* the bill for the buckle?

AGNES

The bill for the buckle? (*She laughs merrily.*) There is no bill for the buckle! (JOE *stands looking questioningly at her, then walks away a little.*) What's the matter, dear? Was that very wicked?

JOE

But, Mother . . .

AGNES

Joe, what are you thinking, darling?

(JOE *turns to her, takes her face between his hands and looks into her eyes wonderingly.*)

JOE

(*Smiling whimsically*)

When I look at you, Mother, I can't think. I only know that I love you . . . that you are the most adorable woman in the world!

CURTAIN

APPENDIX I

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

PRODUCTIONS 1918–1919 to 1923–1924

I. ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS OF "CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS"

FIRST SERIES 1918–1919
March 14–15, 1919

WHEN WITCHES RIDE, A Play of Folk Superstition, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

THE RETURN OF BUCK GAVIN, A Tragedy of a Mountain Outlaw by *Thomas Clayton Wolfe.*

WHAT WILL BARBARA SAY?, A Romance of Chapel Hill, by *Minnie Shepherd Sparrow.*

SECOND SERIES 1918–1919
May 30–31, 1919

PEGGY, A Tragedy of the Tenant Farmer, by *Harold Williamson.*

THE FIGHTING CORPORAL, A Negro Comedy by *Louisa Reid.*

THIRD SERIES 1919–1920
December 12–13, 1919

WHO PAYS? A Tragedy of Industrial Conflict, by *Minnie Shepherd Sparrow.*

THE THIRD NIGHT, A Ghost Play of the Carolina Mountains, by *Thomas Clayton Wolfe.*

THE HAG, A Comedy of Folk Superstition, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

FOURTH SERIES 1919–1920
April 30 and May 1, 1920

OFF NAGS HEAD, or THE BELL BUOY, A Tragedy of the Carolina Coast, by *Dougald MacMillan.*

THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES, A Play of the Croatan Outlaws, by *Paul Greene.*

"DOD GAST YE BOTH!", A Comedy of Mountain Moonshiners, by *Hubert Heffner.*

FIFTH SERIES 1920–1921
February 11–12, 1921

THE MISER, A Farm Tragedy, by *Paul Greene.*

THE VAMP, A Comedy of University Life, by *William Royall.*

THE OLD MAN OF EDENTON, A Melodrama of Colonial Carolina, by *Paul Greene.*

SIXTH SERIES 1920–1921
April 29–30, 1921

THE CHATHAM RABBIT, A Comedy of College Life by *LeGette Blythe.*

THE REAPING, A Play of Social Problem, by *John Terry.*

IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, A Comedy of a Country Courtship, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay.*

SEVENTH SERIES 1921–1922
December 2–3, 1921

REWARD OFFERED, A Comedy of Mountain Characters, by *Jane Toy.*

TRISTA, A Play of Colonial Superstition, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

WAFFLES FOR BREAKFAST, A Comedy of Newly-Married Life, by *Mary Yellott.*

EIGHTH SERIES 1921–1922
March 10–11, 1922

THE LORD'S WILL, A Tragedy of a Country Preacher, by *Paul Greene.*

DOGWOOD BUSHES, A Romance of the Carolina Country, by *Wilbur Stout.*

BLACKBEARD, PIRATE OF THE CAROLINA COAST, by *Paul Greene* and *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

NINTH SERIES 1922–1923
January 26–27, 1923.

WRACK P'INT, A Melodrama of the Carolina Coast, by *Paul Greene.*

AGATHA, A Romance of the old South, by *Jane Toy.*

WILBUR'S COUSIN, A Comedy of College Life, by *Ernest Thompson.*

TENTH SERIES 1922–1923
April 13–14, 1923.

JOHN LANE'S WIFE, A Tragedy of the Farm, by *Mack Gorham.*

THE BERRY PICKERS, A Colorado Folk-Comedy, by *Russell Potter.*

MAMMA, A Comedy of Modern Manners, by *Ernest Thompson.*

ELEVENTH SERIES 1923–1924
November 16–17, 1923

THE BLACK ROOSTER, A Comedy of Country Folk, by *Pearl Setzer.*

NAT MACON'S GAME, The Romance of a Revolutionary Patriot, by *Osler Bailey.*

GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., A Comedy of Plantation Days, by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

TWELFTH SERIES 1923–1924
February 8–9, 1924

SERVANTS OF GOD, A Play of a Small-Town Preacher, by *Robert S. Pickens.*

THE BEADED BUCKLE, A Comedy of Present-Day Aristocracy by *Frances Gray.*

FIXIN'S, A Tragedy of a Tenant-Farm Woman, by *Erma* and *Paul Greene.*

THIRTEENTH SERIES 1923–1924
April 4–5, 1924

THE YOUNGER, A Comedy of the Present-Day Flapper, by *Sue Byrd Thompson.*

THE WHEEL, The Evolution of a College Boy, by *Ernest Thompson.*

II. STATE TOURS.

FIRST STATE TOUR

May 7–14, 1921

THE MISER, by *Paul Greene;* WHEN WITCHES RIDE, by *Elizabeth Lay;* IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay.*

SECOND STATE TOUR

January 16–24, 1922

THE MISER, by *Paul Greene;* IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay;* TRISTA, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

THIRD STATE TOUR

May 1–27, 1922

THE LORD'S WILL, by *Paul Greene;* DOGWOOD BUSHES, by *Wilbur Stout;* IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay;* TRISTA, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

FOURTH STATE TOUR

February 5–14, 1923

AGATHA, by *Jane Toy;* OFF NAGS HEAD, by *Dougald MacMillan;* WILBUR'S COUSIN, by *Ernest Thompson.*

FIFTH STATE TOUR

April 16–28, 1923

AGATHA, by *Jane Toy;* PEGGY, by *Harold Williamson;* MAMMA by *Ernest Thompson.*

SIXTH STATE TOUR

November 19–December 7, 1923

NAT MACON'S GAME, by *Osler Bailey;* THE BLACK ROOSTER, by *Pearl Setzer;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy Cobb.*

SEVENTH STATE TOUR

February 13–21, 1924

THE BLACK ROOSTER, by *Pearl Setzer;* FIXIN'S, by *Erma* and *Paul Greene;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy Cobb.*

EIGHTH STATE TOUR

April 9–17, 1924

THE BEADED BUCKLE, by *Frances Gray;* FIXIN'S, by *Erma* and *Paul Greene;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

III. FOREST THEATER PRODUCTIONS.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, July 31, 1919.

TWELFTH NIGHT, July 29, 1920.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, July 29, 1921.

AS YOU LIKE IT, July 29, 1922.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS, August 28, 1923.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW (*Tercentenary Production*), October 15, 1923.

PRUNELLA, by *Housman* and *Barker,* May 30, and August 26, 1924.

IV. OTHER PRODUCTIONS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, by *Oscar Wilde,* March 1–2, 1920.

SUPPRESSED DESIRES, by *Susan Glaspell* and *George Cram Cooke,* and HOW HE LIED TO HER HUSBAND, by *Bernard Shaw,* October 28–29, 1921.

SEVENTEEN, by *Booth Tarkington,* November 10–11, 1922.

V. SPECIAL PERFORMANCES.

1. FIRST PERFORMANCES OUT-OF-TOWN

   May 7, 1920. Municipal Theater, Greensboro, N. C. OFF NAGS HEAD, by *Dougald MacMillan;* LAST OF THE LOWRIES, by *Paul Greene;* "DOD GAST YE BOTH!", by *Hubert Heffner.*

2. DEDICATION OF THE HIGH POINT MUNICIPAL THEATER

   October 25, 1923. High Point, N. C. WHEN WITCHES RIDE, by *Elizabeth A. Lay;* WILBUR'S COUSIN, by *Ernest Thompson.*

3. NORTH CAROLINA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

   March 14, 1924. The Auditorium. Raleigh, N. C. THE BLACK ROOSTER, by *Pearl Setzer;* FIXIN'S, by *Erma* and *Paul Greene;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

4. GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA.

May 4, 1923. AGATHA, by *Jane Toy;* PEGGY, by *Harold Williamson;* MAMMA, by *Ernest Thompson.*

May 2, 1924. THE BEADED BUCKLE, by *Frances Gray;* FIXIN'S, by *Erma* and *Paul Greene;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

5. SUMMER PERFORMANCES

July 21–22, 1919, Chapel Hill. WHEN WITCHES RIDE, by *Elizabeth A. Lay;* PEGGY, by *Harold Williamson.*

July 22–23, 1920, Chapel Hill. THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES, by *Paul Greene;* OFF NAGS HEAD, by *Dougald MacMillan;* "DOD GAST YE BOTH!", by *Hubert Heffner.*

July 18–19, 1921, Chapel Hill. IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout;* THE MISER, by *Paul Greene;* THE VAMP, by *William Royall.*

6. COMMENCEMENT PERFORMANCES

June 17, 1919. Chapel Hill. WHAT WILL BARBARA SAY?, by *Minnie Shepherd Sparrow;* PEGGY, by *Harold Williamson.*

June 15, 1920. Chapel Hill. "DOD GAST YE BOTH!", by *Hubert Heffner;* THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES, by *Paul Greene.*

June 14, 1921. Chapel Hill. WHEN WITCHES RIDE, by *Elizabeth A. Lay;* IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout.*

June 13, 1922. Chapel Hill. THE MISER, by *Paul Greene;* DOGWOOD BUSHES, by *Wilbur Stout.*

June 12, 1923. Chapel Hill. AGATHA, by *Jane Toy;* MAMMA, by *Ernest Thompson.*

June 10, 1924. Chapel Hill. FIXIN'S, by *Erma* and *Paul Greene;* THE WHEEL, by *Ernest Thompson.*

VI. A SUMMARY.

In the first six seasons of their history, from 1918–1919 to 1923–1924, The Carolina Playmakers have produced 37 of their original *Carolina Folk-Plays,* by 25 different authors. In these and their productions of other plays, 451 different players have had speaking parts. In the eight State Tours, 76 different towns of North Carolina have been visited; and 65,400 people have attended the performances.

APPENDIX II

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

I. PLAYS.

WHEN WITCHES RIDE, a Carolina folk-play, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*
The Magazine, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., April, 1919.

DEFERRED PAYMENT, a play of the North Carolina mountains by *Thomas Clayton Wolfe.*
The Magazine, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., June, 1919.

ELEMENTAL MAN, a play of the mountain people, by *Willard Goforth.*
The Magazine, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., June, 1919.

RALEIGH, THE SHEPHERD OF THE OCEAN, a Tercentenary drama, by *Frederick H. Koch.* (Illustrated.)
Edwards and Broughton, Raleigh, N. C., 1920.

A PAGEANT OF THE LOWER CAPE FEAR, a communal historical drama, written under the direction of *Frederick H. Koch.* Wilmington Printing Co., Wilmington, N. C., 1921.

GRANNY BOLING, a play of negro life, by *Paul Greene.*
The Drama, Chicago, August-September, 1921.

CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS, Edited, with an Introduction on FOLK-PLAY MAKING, by *Frederick H. Koch.* (Illustrated.)
Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1922.
WHEN WITCHES RIDE, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*
THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES, by *Paul Greene.*
OFF NAGS HEAD, by *Dougald MacMillan.*
PEGGY, by *Harold Williamson.*
"DOD GAST YE BOTH!" by *Hubert Heffner.*

WHITE DRESSES, a tragedy of negro life, by *Paul Greene* in *Contemporary One-Act Plays.* (Lewis)
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1922.

THE LORD'S WILL, a Carolina folk-play by *Paul Greene.*
Poet Lore, Boston, Autumn, 1922.

THE THRICE-PROMISED BRIDE, a Chinese folk-play, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*
The Theater Arts Magazine, New York, October, 1923.
The Carolina Magazine, Chapel Hill, N. C., October, 1923.

SAM TUCKER, a negro tragedy, by *Paul Greene.*
Poet Lore, Boston, Summer 1923.

GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., a play of plantation times, by *Lucy M. Cobb.*
The Carolina Magazine, Chapel Hill, N. C., November, 1923.

ALICE MARKHAM, SPINSTER, by *Sara Duncan.*
The Carolina Magazine, Chapel Hill, N. C. February, 1924.

THE BLACK ROOSTER, a comedy of country life, by *Pearl Setzer.*
The Southern Ruralist, Atlanta, April 1, 1924.

AUNT MAHALY'S CABIN, a negro folk-play, by *Paul Greene.*
The Reviewer, Richmond, April, 1924.

AGATHA, a play of the Old South, by *Jane Toy.*
The Southern Ruralist, Atlanta, April 15th, 1924.

THE MARVELLOUS ROMANCE OF WEN CHUN-CHIN, a Chinese folk-play, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*
Poet Lore, Boston, Autumn 1924.

II. ARTICLES CONCERNING THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS, Editorial article. (Illustrated.)
The American Review of Reviews, New York, September, 1919.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE THEATER TO-DAY, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The Drama, Chicago, November, 1919.

FOLK PLAYMAKING, Editorial article. (Illustrated.)
Theater Arts Magazine, New York, April, 1920.

THE CREATIVE IMPULSE AND PLAYMAKING, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The English Journal, Chicago, May, 1920.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS, by *Philip Hettleman.* (Illustrated.)
The Theater Magazine, New York, October, 1920.

RALEIGH, A TERCENTENARY PAGEANT-DRAMA (Illustrated), by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*
Christian Science Monitor, Boston, January 7, 1921.

RALEIGH, THE SHEPHERD OF THE OCEAN. (Book Review)
Theater Arts Magazine, New York, April, 1921.

RALEIGH, THE SHEPHERD OF THE OCEAN. (Book Review, Illustrated.)
The Drama, Chicago, April, 1921.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF "CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS."
The Theater Magazine, New York, May, 1921.

AMATEURS AND THE FUTURE, by *Walter Pritchard Eaton.* (Illustrated.)
Shadowland, New York, September, 1921.

THE ACTED DRAMA IN OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The Drama, Chicago, October-November, 1921.

THE FOREST THEATER AND THE BANKSIDE THEATER. (Illustrations.)

The Theater Magazine, New York, January, 1922.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS, by *Paul Benjamin.* (Illustrated.)
The Survey Graphic, New York, July 1, 1922.

TOWARD A NEW THEATER, by *Walter Pritchard Eaton.*
The Freeman, July 12, 1922.

FOLK PLAYMAKING, by *Frederick H. Koch.* (Illustrated.)
The Theater Magazine, New York, October, 1922.

FOLK-PLAY MAKING IN NORTH CAROLINA, by *Frederick H. Koch.* (Illustrated.)
The Drama, Chicago, November, 1922.

THE REAL REVOLT IN OUR THEATER, by *Walter Pritchard Eaton.* (Illustrated.)
Scribner's Magazine, New York, November, 1922.

NORTH CAROLINA DRAMATIZING ITS HISTORY. (Editorial.)
The World's Work, New York, December, 1922.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS, by *George V. Denny.* (Illustrated.)
The Billboard, New York, December 16, 1922.

AUGUSTUS THOMAS ON THE NATIONAL THEATER, by *Colgate Baker.*
The New York Review, New York, December 23, 1922.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS. (Illustrated.)
The New York Times, Magazine Section, December 31, 1922.

HOME-MADE PLAYS AND PLAYERS FROM THE TAR HEEL COUNTRY, by *Sidney Blackmer.* (Illustrated.)
The New York Herald, New York, January 28, 1923.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE FOREST THEATER.
The Drama, Chicago, April, 1923.

KOCH, THE PLAYMAKER, by *Gerald W. Johnson.*
The Greensboro (N. C.), *Daily News,* May 6, 1923.

AMERICAN DRAMA WHICH COMES FROM THE HEART, by *J. Olin Howe.* (Illustrated.)
The Dearborn Independent, Dearborn, Michigan, November 17, 1923.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SHAKESPEREAN PRODUCTIONS IN THE FOREST THEATER.
The Theater Magazine. New York, April, 1924.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF "CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS."
The Theater Magazine, New York, July, 1924.

WRITE AND ACT YOUR OWN DRAMA, by *W. O. Saunders.* (Illustrated.)
The Southern Magazine, Nashville, Tenn., May, 1924.

A FOLK THEATER IN THE MAKING, by *Frederick H. Koch.* (Illustrated.)
Theater Arts Monthly, September, 1924.

III. A SELECTED LIST OF REVIEWS OF "CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS—FIRST SERIES."

The Washington Post, December 10, 1922. (Frances L. Baer)

The Literary Review of The New York Evening Post, Dec. 30, 1922.

The Billboard, New York, January 6, 1923. (Gordon Whyte)

The New York World, January 21, 1923. (Maxwell Anderson—"Pendragon")

The New York Tribune, January 21, 1923. (Roscoe W. Brink)

The Washington News, January 24, 1923. (Frank Taylor)

The New York Times, Book Review Section. (Illustrated.) February 4, 1923.

Judge, February 10, 1923. (Walter Pritchard Eaton.)

Book Review Digest, New York, March, 1923.

The Literary Digest International Book Review, March 1923. (Lloyd Morris)

The Freeman, New York, April 11, 1923, (M. L. M.)

The New York Evening Post, May 17, 1923. (Charles Pike Sawyer)

Ex Libris, Paris, January, 1924. (Prue Durant Smith)

APPENDIX III

THE DAKOTA PLAYMAKERS *

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

I. PAGEANTS AND MASQUES.

A PAGEANT OF THE NORTH-WEST, written by a group of eighteen undergraduate students under the direction of *Frederick H. Koch.* Published by the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. Dak., 1914.

SHAKESPEARE, THE PLAYMAKER, a Tercentenary Masque, written in collaboration by a group of twenty undergraduate students under the direction of *Frederick H. Koch.* Published by the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. Dak., 1916, and in *The Quarterly Journal* (University of North Dakota), Grand Forks, N. Dak., July 1916.

THE BOOK OF THE DICKEY COUNTY PAGEANT, written in collaboration by twenty members of the community, under the direction of *Mattie Crabtree,* of The Dakota Playmakers.

* Frederick H. Koch, Founder and Director until 1918.
Franz Rickaby, Director, 1918–1923.
E. D. Schonberger, Director, 1923–1924.

Published by the *Dickey County Leader,* Ellendale, N. Dak. 1917.

THE NEW DAY, A Masque of the Future, by *Margaret Plank Ganssle,* of the Dakota Playmakers.

Published by *The Times-Herald Co.,* Grand Forks, N. Dak., 1918.

THE BOOK OF THE PATRIOTIC PAGEANT OF DICKEY COUNTY, written in collaboration by eleven Dickey County people, under the direction of *Mattie Crabtree,* of The Dakota Playmakers. Published by the *Dickey County Leader,* Ellendale, N. Dak., 1918.

THE SELISH, an Indian Pageant-Masque, written and produced by students of the University of Montana, under the direction of *Margaret Plank Ganssle,* of the Dakota Playmakers, July 30, 1919.

Published at Missoula, Montana, by the University of Montana, 1919.

II. PLAYS.

PLAYMAKER PLAYS. Published by the Dakota Playmakers of the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. Dak., and edited by Franz Rickaby, 1920.

KARA, by *George A. Crain.*

SACRIFICE, a tragedy in one act, by *Ruth L. Baughman.*

PEG'S LITTLE SISTER, a farce, by *Anne M. Mitchell.*

His Wife's Place, by *Clarence B. Kelland.*
Mistletoe, by *Anne M. Mitchell.*

The Christmas Spirit, a poetic fantasy in two acts, by *Franz* and *Lillian Rickaby,* Walter H. Baker Company, Boston, 1922.

The Diabolical Circle, by *Beulah Bornstead,* in *Contemporary One-Act Plays,* edited by B. Roland Lewis, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1922.

Dakota Playmaker Plays, edited by *Franz Rickaby.* Published by Walter H. Baker and Company, Boston, 1923.

The Diabolical Circle, by *Beulah Bornstead.*

John Bargrave, Gentleman, by *John E. Grinnell.*

Another Man's Place, by *Marion Wilder.*

Dowry and Romance, by *Rose C. Meblin.*

III. ARTICLES CONCERNING THE DAKOTA PLAYMAKERS.

A Pageant of the Prairies, an illustrated editorial article.
The Survey, New York, July 4, 1914.

The New Art of Pageantry in the United States, an illustrated editorial article concerning "A Pageant of the North-west."
Current Opinion, New York, September, 1914.

Amateur Values in Pageantry, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking,

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, October, 1915.

THE AMATEUR THEATER IN THE UNIVERSITY, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The Quarterly Journal, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. Dak., July, 1916.

COMMUNAL PLAYMAKING, an illustrated editorial article.
The American Review of Reviews, New York, September, 1916.

THE UNIVERSITY LABORATORY AND FESTIVAL THEATERS, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
Drama League Monthly, Chicago, September, 1916.

SHAKESPEARE, THE PLAYMAKER, an editorial article.
The Journal of Education, Boston, October 26, 1916.

DAKOTAN DISCOVERIES IN DUAL DRAMATURGY, by *H. K. Moderwell.* (Illustrated.)
Boston Evening Transcript, Boston, September 30, 1916.

SIDE-TRACKING THE MOVIES, an editorial article. (Illustrated.)
The Minnesotan, Minneapolis, Minn., November, 1916.

THE RURAL COMMUNITY DRAMA—A NEW FORM, by *Frederick H. Koch,* an introduction to THE NEW DAY, by *Margaret Plank Ganssle.* Published by *The Times-Herald Co.,* Grand Forks, N. Dak., 1918.

THE DAKOTA PLAYMAKERS, by *Frederick H. Koch.* (Illustrated.)
The American Magazine of Art, Washington, D. C., September, 1918.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLAY-STAGE, by *Albert John Becker.* (Illustrated.)
The Quarterly Journal (University of North Dakota) Grand Forks, N. Dak., October, 1918.

MAKING "A PAGEANT OF THE NORTH-WEST," by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The Quarterly Journal, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. Dak., October, 1918.

THE DAKOTA PLAYMAKERS, by *Frederick H. Koch,* (Illustrated.)
The Quarterly Journal, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. Dak., October, 1918.

The following pages contain advertisements
of some

BOOKS ON THE DRAMA

and

PLAYS

A descriptive circular
of all their books in
this field
will be sent on application by

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
19 W. 44th St. New York

May Lamberton Becker's A READER'S GUIDE BOOK $2.75

This is based on Mrs. Becker's department under this title, originally in *The New York Evening Post* and now running in *The Saturday Review.*

In *The Drama* she gives lists for *A Drama Library, Read-Aloud Plays, Educational Dramatics, Plays for Reading and Study, Plays About Famous Women, Plays That Children Can Give* and *Pantomime Characters in Literature,* also a list of booksellers in different cities that specialize in Drama Books. Elsewhere she lists *Novels About The Stage,* books about *The Movies, Japanese Drama, Shakespeare's England, Costume Books,* and *Devils in Literature* (including The Drama). Drama occupies but a fraction of this comprehensive book, which also covers *Books Instead of College, Music, Art, Architecture, Philosophy, Psychology, Books for a Grippe Convalescent, Funny Books, Novels* (nearly 20 groups), *Writing and Writers, The World Tour, Time, Past and Present, The Arts and Graces, Children and Education, Religion* and *Building A Library.*

Constance G. Wilcox's TOLD IN A CHINESE GARDEN and Other Plays for Outdoors or Indoors. $1.50

The title play is for 6 men and 2 women. The others are: *Pan Pipes* (m. 2, w. 2), *Four of a Kind* (m. 8, a ship's deck), *The Princess in The Fairy Tale* (m. 4, w. 9 and a dragon), and *Mother Goose Garden* (m. 7, w. 4).

Excellent plays for young or for older actors.

The title play is the romance of a rich man's daughter in China, which has been produced and praised in that country. In the second, a shop girl has her moment of poetry and terror. The third is an exciting episode, involving hidden treasure. The fourth tells of a bored princess, a vegetarian dragon and others. The last is a fantasy in which the characters seek a certain fountain that appears to each in very different light.

The Drama: "Treasures to the seeker for suitable dramas for the open . . . highly dramatic and fresh."

Evening Post: ". . . A welcome contribution to the literature of the Little Theatre. Whimsical, imaginative, pictorial. . . . An author of promising originality, taste, and style."

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

PUBLISHERS viii'24 NEW YORK

Jourdain's THE DRAMA IN EUROPE, In Theory and Practice. With a frontispiece and diagram. $2.25

Miss Eleanor F. Jourdain bears degrees from Oxford and from The University of Paris, has been a lecturer at Oxford, and is now Principal of St. Hughes College there. But her writing is human and up-to-date. A discussion of French classic drama is lightened by an allusion to *Finafore,* and in The Greek Theatre at Athens she sees a spirit in the audience similar to that of Bayreuth and Oberammergau pilgrims of to-day. She sketches her subject from Euripides to Galsworthy, and most interestingly shows how changes in the construction of stages and auditoriums altered the nature of plays, how the actors, who were far from the audience, once had to rant and gesticulate, but have abandoned these practices in the more intimate theatre of to-day, in which also Fate has taken the place of the gods and the supernatural devices of the earlier theatre. She shows how spectacular scenery came from the masque and later from the opera, how great architects, like Sir Christopher Wren, worked on stage scenery, as Urban does to-day, and how many other changes have come about, many due to the interests and demands of a changing social order.

TWELVE PLAYS

Edited by Edwin Van B. Knickerbocker. For Reading, Study and Acting in English Classes. $1.48

The success of Mr. Knickerbocker's earlier *Plays for Classroom Interpretation* was so great, that he has made this new volume in response to numerous requests. As in his first book, he has carefully selected plays that do not disregard conventional morality, but are varied and representative. His commentary and suggestions (filling some 60 pages) are again highly helpful.

The plays are *Where But in America* by Oscar M. Wolff, *The Forfeit* by T. B. Rogers, *Poor Maddalena* by Louise Saunders, *Playing With Fire* by Percival Wilde, *The Stepmother* by Arnold Bennett, *On Vengeance Height* by Ailan Davis, *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Tchekoff, *A Pipe of Peace* by Margaret Cameron, *Enter the Hero* by Theresa Helburn, *The Pot Boiler* by Alice Gerstenberg, *Over the Hills* by John Palmer and *The Game of Chess* by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman.

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

Rostand's CYRANO DE BERGERAC

The translation by BRIAN HOOKER, which is played by WALTER HAMPDEN. With a "prefatory gesture" by CLAYTON HAMILTON. $1.75.

A generation of theatre-goers has passed since Coquelin and Mansfield played "Cyrano" here, and in that time the play has not been given excepting for an occasional special matinee.

Walter Hampden tried the several existing translations, but did not find one which he felt he could enjoy acting. He feels this play fairly inspired our noted poet, Mr. Hooker. Mr. Hooker not only gives us fine poetry, but a version of Rostand's entire play, that both faithfully retains his thought and is eminently suited to stage production.

Clayton Hamilton in the Introduction: "The English text has turned alive under his hands and kindled itself into a veritable poem. It conveys from one language to another the briskness, the brilliance, the eloquence, the spontaneity, the rapture of the original."

Constance D'Arcy Mackay's FRANKLIN

A play in four acts. By the author of *The Beau of Bath* and other XVIIIth Century Playlets, which is in its third American edition and is to be published in England. She shows us Franklin from his "Poor Richard" days through the signing of the treaty with France. $1.75.

Boston Herald: "We see Franklin as the wag, the dreamer, the lover, the scientist, the author, the diplomat, the patriot. It is a fascinating play to read."

Theatre Magazine: "The character of Franklin himself is delightfully drawn, a splendid part for some real actor to bite into . . . the other parts each stand out in a life-like manner, with freshness and charm. . . . Franklin only needs his proper interpreter to become a second 'Disraeli.'"

George Middleton's and Guy Bolton's POLLY WITH A PAST AND ADAM AND EVA

Two three-act comedies of America today in one volume. Both have had long runs on the professional stage and are eminently suitable for Little Theatres.

Bookman: "Much good dialog and a deal of amusement."

Providence Journal: "They have a marked strain of wit running through them."

Clayton Hamilton in *New York Herald:* "The characters are adequately true to our contemporary American life, and the dialog is fluent, brisk and very often brilliant."

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
19 WEST 44TH STREET (viii '23) NEW YORK

BY CLAYTON HAMILTON

Each book fully indexed. 12mo. $2.25 net.

Brander Mathews in *New York Times:* "His four volumes of collected dramatic criticisms are not unworthy to be set on the shelf by the side of Lemaitre and Faguet. . . . He has insight and sympathy and disinterestedness. These plays are vital and vivid in Mr. Hamilton's pages.

PROBLEMS OF THE PLAYWRIGHT

Building a Play Backward; Surprise in the Drama; High Comedy in America; The George M. Cohan School of Playrights; Middle Class Opinion; Dramatic Talent and Theatrical Talent; The Plays of Lord Dunsany; Romance and Realism in the Drama; Scenic Settings in America; The Non-Commercial Drama; A Democratic Insurrection in the Theatre; A Scheme for a Stock Company; What's Wrong with the American Drama, etc., etc.

STUDIES IN STAGECRAFT

The New Art of Making Plays, The Pictorial Stage, The Modern Art of Stage Direction, A Plea for a New Type of Play, The Undramatic Drama, The Supernatural Drama, The Irish National Theatre, Where to Begin a Play, A New Defense of Melodrama, The Art of the Moving-Picture Play, The One-Act Play in America, Organizing an Audience, etc., etc.

THE THEORY OF THE THEATRE

What is a Play?—The Actor and the Dramatist.—Stage Conventions in Modern Times.—The Four Leading Types of Drama.—The Modern Social Drama.—The *Public* and the Dramatist.—Dramatic Art and the Theatre Business.—Dramatic Literature and Theatric Journalism.—The Function of Imagination, etc., etc.

SEEN ON THE STAGE

This book covers a wide range of plays, authors, etc., including O'Neill, Dunsany, Ervine, Drinkwater, Shaw and Tolstoi.

BY LOUIS CALVERT

PROBLEMS OF THE ACTOR

With an Introduction by CLAYTON HAMILTON.

John Corbin in *The New York Times:* "The best book on acting in English . . . teems with happy anecdotes."

$2.25.

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

PUBLISHERS (10'23) NEW YORK

Producing in Little Theaters

by CLARENCE STRATTON

Author of "Public Speaking"

258 pages—70 illustrations—11 chapters

Annotated list of 200 plays for amateurs

$2.90

A model manual, sane and sensible, helpful and practical . . . A word of praise must be given to the many illustrations. . . . selected to adorn this book. . . . Immediately helpful.—*Brander Matthews in New York Times.*

The most important book for the small stage and one of the most practical additions to theatrical literature for some time past.—*New York Literary Review.*

The amateur producer is bound to appreciate these pages particularly.—*St. Louis Star.*

It is impossible to over-estimate the value of this book as a practical and stimulating help.—*Hartford Courant.*

A record of interesting experiments in stagecraft with well selected list of 200 plays suitable for amateurs.—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

A varied and unusual collection of facts and data. . . . Sanely and soundly acquainted with things theatrical.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

For the thousands of teachers who take on dramatics as extra duty, the work is invaluable.—*Drama.*

The book is extremely well done. . . . To its public it will be indispensable.—*Chicago Evening Post.*

The first book which has come forth which treats all the important phases of a little theater.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

An excellent book. . . . Knows his subject well.—*Boston Herald.*

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

BY CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

THE LITTLE THEATRE IN THE UNITED STATES
Illustrated. With index. Large 12mo.

COSTUMES AND SCENERY FOR AMATEURS
With numerous illustrations and index. Large 12mo.

HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS $1.35

PLAYS

THE BEAU OF BATH and Other One-Act Plays
The Silver Lining, Ashes of Roses, Gretna Green, Counsel Retained. The Prince of Court Painters. Plays for amateurs and for Little Theatres. With illustrations after Reynolds, Humphrey and Romney.

THE FOREST PRINCESS and Other Masques
The Gift of Time (a Christmas Masque), *A Masque of Conservation. The Masque of Pomona, A Christmas Masque, The Sun Goddess, A Masque of Old Japan, The Revival of the Masque,* supplemented by papers on *Costumes for Masques* and *Music for Masques.*

PATRIOTIC PLAYS AND OTHER PAGEANTS
The Pageant of Patriotism and *The Hawthorne Pageant.* Both are given in versions for outdoor and for indoor performance, and arranged so that they can be split up into short plays.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART
Short plays in verse for children of fourteen or younger:—*The House of the Heart* (Morality Play), *The Enchanted Garden* (Flower Play), *A Little Pilgrim's Progress* (Morality Play), *A Pageant of Hours* (to be given out of doors), *On Christmas Eve, The Princess and the Pixies, The Christmas Guest* (Miracle Play), etc.

THE SILVER THREAD and Other Folk Plays
The Silver Thread (Cornish), *The Forest Spring* (Italian), *The Foam Maiden* (Celtic), *Troll Magic* (Norwegian), *The Three Wishes* (French), *A Brewing of Brains* (English), *Siegfried* (German), *The Snow Witch* (Russian).

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

[illegible]

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE LIBRARY
Date Due

2-11	MAY 1	DEC 15 '48	APR 22 '73
3-2	MAY 17	MAY 6 '50	
MAY 16	MAY 29	DEC 10 '54	
MAY 29	28 '40	OCT 22 '57	
OCT 11	NOV 30 '42	DEC 17 '58	
6 100	APR 16 '43	APR 2 '60	
SEP 27	MAY 5 '43	APR 22 '60	
MAY 1	DEC 16 '50	MAY 5 '60	

1877-

PELLETIER LIBRARY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE
812.08 K811c Ser.2 AVLL
Koch, Frederick Henr/Carolina folk-plays
3 3768 00105 6079
PELLETIER LIBRARY
ALLEGHENY COLLEGE